

## Safe Flying Tip number nine: Formation Flying-A Flight of Two

Accident that resulted in a stall/spin due to following too close in a flight of two and encountering wake turbulence from the lead aircraft.

Our light sport mechanic Richard Maisano was flying to Oshkosh to display a new Bristell at the show. Our sales manager, Captain John Rathmell was in another Bristell and they were flying as a flight of two.

The weather was good and the flight of two was cleared to land on runway 36. The wind was from 290 degrees at 17 knots.

It was a typical Air Venture with lots of traffic. John and Rich flew from the Ripon check point to Fiske, then followed the road which lead to the turn onto final approach for runway 36.

The controller directed them to land on the purple dot.

Rich got too close to John and was reducing power as he encountered wake turbulence at about 200 feet AGL. The wind was from the left and blew the wake turbulence into Rich's left wing.

The wing stalled and the plane entered into a spin. There was not enough altitude to recover and the plane stuck the ground in a near vertical profile.

Rich was fortunate to survive this accident. He will recover.

Rich could have avoided this stall/spin in the following ways:

- Not have agreed to a flight of two when going into such a busy airport as Whitman Field during the Air Venture show.
- Maintained more space between the two aircraft in the flight of two.
- Stayed more to the right so when he started to overtake the lead aircraft he could have simply overtook the lead plane.
- Followed a better protocol which would have had the lead aircraft call "about to slow down" and having the following aircraft respond "roger", at which time the lead aircraft would have initiated the power reduction.
- Following on the upwind side as the crosswind from the left may have blown the wake turbulence into Rich who was following on the right.