

Ball Player's Jet Overruns Runway in Burbank

Jennifer Oldham, LA Times | OCT 14, 2006

A private jet with seven aboard -- including New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez - slightly overran a runway at Burbank's Bob Hope Airport on Friday and was stopped by a special material designed to keep craft on the airfield, officials said.

No one was injured after the Gulfstream landed on the airport's east-west Runway 8, slowed down and then turned into an area covered with a system designed to bring aircraft to a stop, said Ian Gregor, a Federal Aviation Administration spokesman.

"The guy was rolling so slowly," Gregor said. "This wasn't a plane that was shooting off the end of the runway."

The aircraft's nose wheel drifted about 36 feet into the material, which consists of concrete blocks injected with air bubbles that are designed to collapse under the weight of a jet and slow it to a stop. The emergency pavement is an area of about 170 feet by 170 feet, or 28,900 square feet, at the end of the runway, Gregor said.

Friday's incident, which occurred about 11:30 a.m., closed the runway for four hours. No flights were delayed, officials said.

The federal National Transportation Safety Board is investigating and will retrieve the aircraft's cockpit voice recorder, gather radar data and evaluate the performance of the Engineered Materials Arresting System, or EMAS. The airport installed the \$4-million safety system after a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 skidded off the same runway and onto a street in 2000, injuring 43 passengers and the captain.

The Gulfstream's owner may be on the hook for new concrete blocks at \$5,000 a pop, said Victor Gill, an airport spokesman.

Five passengers and two crew members were aboard the plane, which was registered to a corporation in Delaware. There was minor damage to the aircraft.

Yankees ballplayer Rodriguez was on the flight from Las Vegas, aviation officials said, adding that a silhouette of a baseball player swinging a bat with "A-Rod" beneath it is affixed on the inside of winglets on the jet.

The incident occurred just two days after Rodriguez's teammate, Yankees pitcher Cory Lidle, died when his small plane slammed into a condominium tower in Manhattan.

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