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S.M. García-Rodríguez, J. Costa, A. Bardera, V. Singery, D. Trias

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A 3D tomographic investigation to elucidate the low-velocity impact resistance, tolerance and damage sequence of thin non-crimp fabric laminates: effect of ply-thickness

S.M. García-Rodríguez^{a,*}, J. Costa^a, A. Bardera^b, V. Singery^c, D. Trias^a

^aAMADE, Polytechnic School, University of Girona, Av. Universitat de Girona, 4. 17003 Girona, Spain

^bGraphics and Imaging Laboratory, University of Girona, Av. Universitat de Girona, 4. 17003 Girona, Spain

^cChomarot, 39 Avenue de Chabannes, 07160, Le Cheylard, France

Abstract

While thin-ply laminates delay the onset of matrix cracking and improve certain in-plane mechanical properties, the effect they have on the out-of-plane response remains unclear. We compared the impact resistance, tolerance and sequence of failure events of thin laminates manufactured with thin- or standard-ply non-crimp fabrics (fibre areal weight of 67 and 134 gsm per ply). Damage initiation and propagation was detailed using (a) quasi-static indentation and impact tests at incremental energy levels and (b) X-ray tomography. The analysis revealed the damage mechanisms underlying the observed load drops in the force-displacement curves. In the indented specimens, the 3D post-process ascribed matrix cracks and delaminations to their corresponding plies/interfaces. Standard-ply samples develop more extended delaminations and delay fibre failure, improving the load-carrying capacity and increasing compression after impact (CAI) strength by 27% for impact at 14 J.

Keywords: Thin-ply, B. Impact behaviour, C. Damage mechanics, D. CT analysis

*Corresponding author. Tel.: +34 972 418 817

Email addresses: santiago.garcia@udg.edu (S.M. García-Rodríguez), josep.costa@udg.edu (J. Costa)

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