

11TH ANNUAL NATIONAL

With a whirlwind finish on Saturday, July 13, the Eleventh Annual National Soaring Contest came to a highly successful close. Although the following day, Sunday, officially closed the meet, Saturday was the day which highlighted an otherwise mediocre contest. When two national records are broken, the distance record raised from 263 miles to 290 miles and the two-place distance record raised from 43 miles to 212 miles, the annual national contest can be called a success.

The contest was officially opened Saturday, June 29, with appropriate ceremonies. Lewin B. Barringer served as master of ceremonies and introduced several city, county, and state officials who gave words of welcome to the visiting pilots. G. Grant Mason, member of the CAB, gave the principal address which was broadcast over the Mutual network. Lewin Barringer then formally opened the contest by making a short flight in a Schweizer two-place which had been equipped with a two-way radio-telephone. A description of the flight was broadcast from the ship to the ground.

Although showers nearly washed out the opening ceremonies, conditions in the late afternoon permitted some of the high performance ships to take off and duration flights of two and three hours were made over Harris Hill.

Sunday, June 30, was marked by numerous thunder storms. Lawrence D. Montgomery, flying the XYZ "Wolf" inadvertently tackled a thunder cloud and attained 9000 feet above the point of release for the outstanding flight of the day. The ride was a rough one and considerable hail was encountered. Upon landing, he discovered his cockpit filled with several inches of hail stones.

Monday, July 1, the first real distance flight of the meet was made when Chet Decker soared from Harris Hill to Captree Island State Park on the southern shore of Long Island, a distance of 230 miles. John Robinson was second with a flight of 92 miles and an altitude of 10,000 feet. Helen Montgomery was caught in a tricky downdraft in the lee of Harris Hill and her ship was forced to spend two days in the Elmira Aviation Ground School, undergoing repairs.

Tuesday, July 2, was a dull day and the pilots did most of their soaring in the hangar. The only contest flight was made by John Robinson who soared 77 miles to Norwich, New York. This flight, however, was ruled out by the Contest Committee inasmuch as John towed to over 5,000 feet before releasing. The flight was noteworthy in that Robinson explored the thermals above the cloud base and he did most of his flying blind.

Late Tuesday afternoon, Richard Johnson of Los Altos, California, the youngest pilot entered in the contest, age 17, earned his "C" license. This flight marked the beginning of a sensational performance by this pilot.

Wednesday, July 3, was just another dull day with no contest flights.

Thursday, July 4, was a mediocre soaring day, but determined pilots turned in creditable performances. John Robinson led with a flight of 130 miles to Harrisburg. Other flights were: Chester Decker, 53 miles to Williamsport, Pa., and Elmer Zook, 36 miles to Canton, Pa.



Upper left: Metzger, First Test Committee EASC; John Robinson, Rear row, National Soaring Contest Chief; Head Timer; Lower Left: Board returned; Barringer as pilot; Above: Sailplane; Upper Right: Son of San; Lower Right: runner-up in

The Fourth of July brought an estimated crowd of 14,000 spectators to Harris Hill to witness the flights. They were entertained by aerobatic maneuvers in motorless craft by such experts as Bob Stanley, Youston Sekella, Howard Blossom, and Donald Lawrence. H. M. (Pete) Peters, official tow-plane pilot for the contest, nearly stole the show with his slow rolls, loops and power dives, which he executed after each airplane tow.

Friday, July 5, was a day of excitement and served as a reminder that inexperienced pilots should steer clear of cloud flying. Frank Boggs of Dallas, Texas, was forced to resort to his parachute when his Baby Albatross folded up in a cloud as the result of loss of control. His ship was badly wrecked but he came up smiling and asserted that blind flying should not be attempted without considerable instruction.

While all this excitement was going on within sight of Harris Hill, Chester Decker and John Robinson were again piling up the points, the former flying 200 miles to N. Beach, New Jersey, and the latter 108 miles to Canadensis, Pa., in the Pocono mountains. Randall Chapman flying the LIT sailplane made the best altitude of the contest with a flight of 11,500 feet while on a 70 mile flight to Factoryville, Pa.

Other outstanding flights of the day were made by Arthur Schultz with a flight of 85 miles and Richard Johnson with a flight of 57 miles which earned for him the first leg on his Silver "C."

Saturday, July 6, was marked by a dead calm "blowing from the wrong direction." The only flight exceeding minimum requirements was that of William Putnam, Highland Park, Michigan, who was launched from the airport in a Midwest and rode a thermal to 4200 feet.

Aerobatic exhibitions kept the visitors entertained throughout the afternoon.