

pilot. Generally, flights upwards of 200 miles have meant a day lost in retrieving. The same distance in Germany would have the pilot and ship back by mid-night of the take-off day. It was rare indeed for a pilot to have to wait more than an hour for his crew, no matter what distance he flew. There's nothing tricky about it. Ground speed of sailplanes is still comparable to motor-car speed. In cases of faster sailplanes or strong winds, the crew starts off in advance of take-off. Liaison is maintained by hourly phone calls back to headquarters by the crew. (Expense is kept to a minimum by discreet use of person-to-person procedures.) If no word is in on their ship, the crew drives another hour in the predetermined direction. This is repeated until the landing is reported. A smooth working team will generally be within 25 miles of a rendezvous. There actually have been cases, other than goal flights, where crews have watched their man land from a 200 mile flight on a straight-out distance hop. There is no excuse for a crew not being on hand at the termination of a goal flight.

Even though good towcars are generally more inherent to U. S. soaring than elsewhere, we lose this advantage by slipshod retrieving. Practically all retrieving falls into one of two categories in this country. Category 1 - Crew consists of one who is usually too tired to drive on the return trip. Weary pilot drives back. Category 2 - Crew consists of an indeterminate number of adolescents, all eager and well meaning but none experienced in efficiency crewing. Car crowded on return trip, thus preventing weary pilot from relaxing and resting. More often than not, inexperience of crew, and/or space at wheel being more commodious, pilot drives. In any case, our pilots are not rested sufficiently to fly a good meet.

The fate of the American contest pilot requires that he must assemble his own ship. It is a tribute to the stamina of American manhood that he can take off on a cross-country within an hour after cajoling and worrying his ship together with little or no assistance. Points should be awarded for this because there's no doubt he sacrifices performance by extending himself to near exhaustion before even getting aloft. In American soaring, more oxygen is needed by pilots on the ground than in the air. Although not recommended, there have been occasions in Europe where a pilot never knew how to assemble or dismantle his ship throughout a meet. In any event, the pilot should not have to exert himself prior to launching—that's what the crew is for.

A good pilot in a serious contest, such as the 14th, should have two 2-man crews if distance and goal flights are his specialty. Altitude and out-and-return specialists can manage with one 2-man crew. The two crew system is scheduled so that retrievals are on alternate days by the same crew. Thus, when one crew brings in the ship, they turn in and the rested crew assembles and starts off with car and trailer. When the latter comes in, places are reversed again. When two contest flights are made in one day, crews are scheduled to best advantage. The point is to keep the contestant in the air as much as possible and by all means keep him relaxed and rested on the ground.

Crewing on two-seater ships should be substantially the same. We still have the naive idea that the second man on board is merely a passenger. This man should

be the captain and should "call the shots." Actually, the Germans proved this point. Following the '37 meet, no allowance was made for two-place ships and they still placed. Chief reason being that the crew captain was "back seat driving". A glance in the rear cockpit dispelled any beliefs a passenger was on board.

A number of people have derived humor from my statement that several German pilots used ambulances and hearses for trailer towing. They certainly were more comfortable than station wagons or trucks for long retrieval hauls. When conditions are good, a major portion of the contest time is spent on the road and in the air. Why be uncomfortable most of the time? Of course, for the boys who kid themselves into thinking their sailplanes are comfortable, they might try the Argentine method of retrieving at the 14th. Due to lack of ground obstructions, they are frequently auto-towed, in the air, back to the starting point.

To some, the above reads like the game is getting out of the "amateur" class. But to those who are sincere in turning in good performances at big contests with present equipment, the crewing problem is the answer. We may not be ready for crew captains or coaches but we'll soon have our "burned out" pilots available when efficient crewing is adopted by men who see the advantages. Possibly before the advent of crew captains, each pilot will need a lawyer to interpret contest rules. It is nearly a full time job for one man, per entrant, to keep apace of the take-off order.

The writer has an ulterior motive in the above harangue. International meets are shaping up for several years to come. They are worth all of the time and money required. The sport achieves its climax, in these affairs, not only in performance but in downright good-fellowship. It's a revelation to find, that even though you are actually only conversant in English, you can discuss soaring to people who never heard or spoke English. Our participation in these events would be very impressive, performancewise, as long as we stayed in the air. But on the ground, we "don't know from nothin'".

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## Comments On Contest Rules

*(Continued from page 8)*

tem has been evolved to stimulate and reward contestants establishing new records. It is believed that at Wichita Falls substantial and respectable national records will be established in all record classifications.

Paragraph 2.2 of the Wichita Falls Rules provides that a contestant may claim contest points in all categories from only one flight of his choice each day, as if such flight were the only flight made by him. The purpose of this paragraph is to encourage distance flying. Without it, contestants would undoubtedly choose to remain over the launching site on a poor to fair soaring day, rather than go cross-country. They could ring up points for many successive altitude and duration flights while the contestant who attempts distance commits himself to one flight of doubtful duration. On a good soaring day with high clouds, a contestant could remain at the contest site and earn more points with 5 successive flights to 11,000 feet than another contestant flying 260 miles. This would make contestants look more like Empire State Building elevator operators than soaring

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