

Luxembourg. A bonus of 30 per cent was added to the score if a contestant could reach his goal. Occupied Germany and Austria were declared forbidden zones.

When comparison of the distances flown is made, European and especially Alpine conditions have to be considered. Samedan is in the center of the Alps and it is necessary to fly over at least two or three high mountain ranges to reach the northern flat country and also one or two ranges to reach the Italian flatlands. In the mountains you cannot go as fast as over level country, except for short distances. You will always come to valleys with poor soaring conditions. You will lose two hours on a little ridge and you will have to make detours. It is especially difficult to get out of the mountains, because there where the valleys open up and the hills begin to fall away, there is often bad soaring and many lakes appear. You also cannot start early, seldom before 10 A.M., often only at noon. The nights are cold and it takes time for the sun to warm the rocks.

On July 26, the sky was covered with Stratus clouds which were touching the mountain peaks. Only one contestant could reach his goal. Those who tried to get out of the Alps had to land at the border of the mountains and those who tried to fly along the chains had difficulty crossing the "Gotthard," a high mountain group in the center of Switzerland well known as an obstacle for all long distance flights. Three pilots were able to fly over the Gotthard and glide down the Rhone valley toward the lake of Geneva. The Spanish pilot T. Ara alone reached his goal (124 miles). M. Schachenmann (142 miles) and R. Fontailles (135 miles) covered the longest distances of the day.

The weather on July 27 was worse than the day before and in spite of the 60 take-offs only one pilot, A. Kuhn, decided to go cross country. He went north and landed after 55 miles.

The morning of July 28 looked very promising with many little Cumulus clouds in the sky. Weather was favorable, but low clouds, touching the mountains, as well as rain and storms in the afternoon required the pilots to be very careful. The chosen goals were situated in three different directions, and names like Nice (French Riviera) were on the list. Two pilots reached their goal. P. A. Persson landed his Weihe at Geneva (186 miles) at the opposite corner of Switzerland and M. Schachenmann landed in Lausanne (158 miles). Persson's score that day was 8000 points and brought him up to first place in the general classification. Persson, holder of the International Altitude Record, proved with his flight that he is an excellent pilot with much experience in cloud flying. In the 1950 World Championship in Sweden it will be very difficult to beat him.

A. Kuhn, third that day, had overflowed his goal and landed after 163 miles near Lausanne. T. Ara was fourth with his goal flight of July 26, followed by A. Valette, S. Maurer, A. Magnusson, and R. Fontailles. Two tragic accidents caused the deaths of two English pilots, Ch. Nicholson and L. Greig, in Italian territory on the southern border of the Alps. Nicholson was flying near a ridge where fog was blown up from the valley. One wing of his sailplane touched the rocks and the glider was smashed. The pilot

was found by some Alpine farmers and was carried down, but he died before medical help could reach him. L. Greig flew into a valley about 2800 feet above the ground when he suddenly collided with a cable. These cables are used to bring lumber down from the mountains and they are almost invisible. These misfortunes caused much sadness in Samedan and no competition was carried out the next day, July 29.

On the last day of the meet the contestants had to accomplish a similar flight as on the first, a goal flight with return (distance and altitude award). The weather was good in the morning, became rapidly worse in the afternoon, and the low clouds around the goal point made it impossible to fly around as prescribed. Altitude again was the dominating influence on the daily score and M. Schachenmann with 13,100 feet placed first, followed by P. A. Persson, Kuhn, and H. Kamil.

The final standings show that Persson earned his well-deserved victory by a fair margin. He had one bad day, the third, when he was slowest in the triangular race, but he was lucky because with the low speed award he did not lose many points. On July 24 he was 16th and all the other days he was among the first four pilots. His successful goal flight to Geneva finally brought him victory.

M. Schachenmann did a marvelous job after the first day. With three single victories, a second and a third place, he caught up and finished in second place. The most steady performances were shown by A. Kuhn who never won a competition but who was never lower than 7th. A. Magnusson, the other Swedish competitor, was steady too, and could place every day among the first ten. T. Ara from Spain was the big surprise of the meet. Nobody had previously known much about Spanish gliding, and the Spanish boys showed how up-to-date they are.

The next day all kinds of demonstrations were made. Notteghem won first place in an acrobatic contest, followed by Kuhn, Isler, and Forbes. Distribution of prizes at a final dinner in St. Moritz concluded this successful contest.

It was originally the idea of the Swiss Aero Club and of the men who had created the Samedan contests to have pilots from all countries meet each summer for an open international soaring contest, similar to the pre-war Rhoen meetings in Germany. Such a contest, however, involves tremendous organization and at present the Swiss Aero Club does not know if a 1949 competition will be possible. In any case, if a contest should take place, it would give the organizers and the contestants the greatest pleasure to have some American pilots participate in the meet.

But even if there is no contest, there is always soaring in Samedan. About 15 sailplanes are ready and waiting there, and each summer pilots come from different countries to enjoy this wonderful sport. Any American glider pilot is most cordially invited to come to Samedan and soar around the snow-covered mountains. Everybody who has flown over these glaciers, chalets and rocks will never forget the time spent in the Engadine. Who comes to Samedan in 1949? (*Final standings on next page.*)