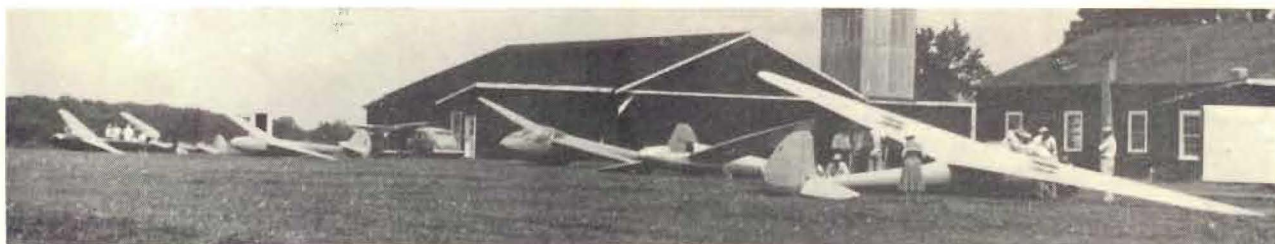


MID-SOUTH CONTEST

MAY 27 and 28



The Weihe gets the attention in the line-up at the Mid-South Championship Contest held May 27-30 at Starkville, Miss.

This contest, although their first attempt, was very successfully conducted and sponsored by the Starkville, Miss., Junior Chamber of Commerce. Contest director was Pat Suddeth who was assisted by Gene Weaver acting as technical advisor. On the take-off line Mel Schwartzberg put his experience in conducting flight operations to good use in getting the contestants off to a good start.

At the first pilots' meeting there appeared as competitors Shelly Charles, Bill Coverdale, Bill Cunningham, Dick Johnson, and Gus Raspet. The pilots' meeting will go down in motorless aviation history for the extremely simple rules which were adopted; one point per mile cross-country; 4 points per thousand feet of altitude gained and 20 points per hour of duration, 25% bonus on cross-country points for goal and return. Barographs were not required, only good sportsmanship. Perhaps one reason for the simple rules was the fact that clouds were popping when the rules were taken up and the boys were anxious to get going.

Dick Johnson got off first in a simplified Flat Top and wasn't heard from until over 6 hours later when he landed 172 miles away at Heflin, Ala. He had declared Birmingham his goal.

Shelly Charles in his Sparkling Robin Egg Blue Weihe also declared Birmingham as a goal but ended up at Gadsden, Ala., some 156 miles away from Camps' Airport where the contest was held.

Unlike most contests the telephone remained very quiet all afternoon and fond supporters of Bill Coverdale and Gus Raspet made various estimates of their cross-country speeds (Raspet in his Kite and Bill in his new Schweizer 1-23) and came up with all sorts of flattering figures of their distance (Bill had declared a difficult goal-and-return to Corinth, Miss., some 100 miles north and Gus hoped to get to Tuscaloosa). About 4 o'clock Gus returned with his crew who had found him down 35 miles away. Good crew, but the pilot had some feeble excuse about gap covers blowing loose. Bill Coverdale returned a few minutes later to tell us that he had only reached Baldwin, Miss., 72 miles away but on his course.

While everything was quiet at the airport Ray Parker towed in with his just-completed modified Tiny Mite. He landed, announced his destination as Tuscaloosa, took off and two hours later reported reaching his goal 70 miles away. The ship really performs now. Eugart Yerian showed up later on Saturday too late to take off cross country. The next day, Sunday, the highlight of the contest was run, a race to Columbus, Miss. and return. The sailplanes taking off earlier were required to hang around the airport and await

a signal from the ground that the race was on. They were to form on the last tow at 1800' and start the race on a signal from the ground. At 1:30 the signal was given and the race was on. The only pilot really anxious to get going was Dick Johnson. He also had gap cover troubles and landed a few miles out. The rest of the racers deliberately climbed for altitude and then started out following Shelly who beat out first. Shelly turned at Columbus first and lead all the way with Ray Parker, Bill Coverdale and Gus Raspet following in order. Shelly arrived over the airport with too much altitude and no quick way to burn it off. Ray Parker came in under him in a screaming dive at 120 mph and landed, jumped out of his ship and ran to the microphone. He was the winner in 1 hr. 20 minutes with Shelly second and Coverdale third. Gus Raspet made it back as far as the crossroads, a place similar to Hill Top or Leons.

Sunday evening the Jaycees arranged a nice chicken barbecue outdoors at which the winners were announced. The Mid-South champion was Shelly Charles and the Inter-Collegiate Champ was Dick Johnson. Dick was the sole competitor for collegiate honors but he earned them. As possible collegiate competitors Purdue, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Lawrence Tech, Texas Tech, Oklahoma A&M, and the University of

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That new Weihe really had Shelly Charles smiling at Starkville.