

American Participation In The Internationals?

By TERRY WHITE

Without attempting the project, one might think that sending an American team to the International Competition in Spain would be a matter of making travel reservations, much as a tourist would for a vacation trip abroad.

This is not the case, for the correspondence and paper work is voluminous and the cost of shipping is great and most soaring pilots are not in financial position to pay the high freight charges on their equipment and passage for themselves.

Walter Setz, Chairman of the SSA Committee on Participation in 1952 World Championship, has spent a colossal amount of time and effort to reduce these costs. In spite of his efforts, transportation costs will be about 90% of the total.

Wally's ingenious manipulations have brought the cost of shipping equipment from approximately \$700.00 one way at the outset to approximately \$172.00 one way, to date, for a Schweizer 1-23. Since rates are per cubic foot costs on other types are comparable. The lowest rate for transportation for personnel, Wally quotes, is \$411.00, one way, by chartered plane.

Reaction to requests to the scheduled airlines has been most disappointing. Admittedly, the air-lines must maintain CAB and IATA tariffs, but it seems that aviation endeavors should command more of their interest and favor. It should be stated, however, that one of these has provided excellent liaison service from its Madrid office in contacting the Real Aero Club de Espana. Charter air services show some promise in providing personnel transportation comparable to third class surface or two-thirds the new air travel (tourist) fares. This data is still being compiled for transit of from 15 to 30 SSA members.

Especially cooperative has been Senor Jose Ordovas, President of the Gliding Commission of the Real Aero Club de Espana.

The Aero Club has been extremely anxious for the American team to participate with American equipment, and Senor Ordovas has been most gracious in contributing useful information and personal effort. His contacts with the U. S. Air Attache in Madrid may prove fruitful, for Col. M. M. Towner, was quite receptive and enthusiastic and made our problem known to the Pentagon with recommendations that consideration be given.

The Department of State has also been apprised of the competitions and possible diplomatic advantages of U. S. participation. In our opinion the goodwill created by an American team would be of inestimable value to American prestige in Europe. However, the Department has not agreed that it would be worth requesting transportation for us on government craft making the journey.

A person who is very interested and helpful is George Haddaway, publisher of FLIGHT magazine. Mr. Haddaway has made many suggestions and written many letters endeavoring to get assistance for our teams and equipment. His editorial in January '52 issue of FLIGHT magazine, "A NATIONAL OPPORTUNITY" exemplifies the importance of the project to America.

The Committee on International Participation, composed of Dr. Klemperer, Capt. Barnaby and Chair-

man Walter Setz presented a committee report to the SSA Directors' Meeting in Memphis which included the plans evolved by the committee. The Committee presents four possible plans which will be followed according to finances and assistance available.

PLAN I: "Austerity!" The SSA requests 3 sailplanes, trailers and cars for the use of its members. This is based on exploiting the Spanish offer and with no foreseeable supplementary assistance provided to the SSA members able to get themselves to and from Spain.

PLAN II: "Minimum Respectable." The SSA send 2 units, comprising 2 sailplanes, trailers, pilots and crews, and requests 3 sailplanes, trailers and 5 cars from the Aero Club. This is based on the assumption that sufficient aid is found to send 2 U. S. units only, and that the Spanish offer is exercised as in PLAN I.

PLAN III: "SSA Choice." The SSA sends 5 Units of men and equipment. This is based on procuring sufficient aid to send an all-American contingent.

PLAN I.1: Identical to Plan I plus capitalizing on the fortunate position of 2 particular SSA members so as to present 5 sailplanes under the Stars-and-Stripes. Namely, one member is presently located in Europe and can procure a sailplane independently. The second member is agreeable to the exchange-sailplane-scheme, whereby he would use an European sailplane in Spain; in return for which he would permit the European to use his own sailplane here for a like period at a later date.

The committee was highly complimented by the Board and was given approval of its planning and arranging the participation of U. S. teams.

Since the CVsM (Gliding Commission of FAI) created a two-place category for the purpose of selecting a World's Two-Place Champion team, the SSA Board approved at least one two-place American team.

The next problem, following finances, is the selection of the team. A series of questionnaires was mailed out to pilots who were thought to be interested in participating in the contest. Fourteen of these pilots signified interest, and it is from these fourteen that the American team will be drawn.

Many of the pilots polled replied that they themselves were not as well qualified as others and that they would be glad to crew for the others.

The participation committee asked the President to select a "jury of peers", 5 top pilots not candidates for the teams, to rate the pilots who are. On the Rating Committee were Fritz Compton, Bill Coverdale, Bill Ivans, E. J. Reeves, and Floyd Sweet.

In his instructions to the committee, President Carsey wrote, "You are requested to very carefully give consideration to each of the following attributes—**first and foremost**,—all other considerations are to be secondary: Piloting ability, contest experience, diplomacy and sportsmanship."

The Rating Committee reported their selections to the Board of Directors at Memphis and the results of the "seeding" or rating is as follows:

1. Dick Johnson
2. Stan Smith
3. Paul MacCready
4. Paul Schweizer

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