

# Northwest Group Pioneers 'Progressive' Type Meet

**T**HE THIRD ANNUAL Northwest Soaring Meet differed from the usual type of soaring meet in that it was not confined to one scene of operations.

The first day's activity started at Wenatchee, Wash., on Saturday, May 16, and the second day's operation began at Moses Lake, Wash., slightly more than 60 airline miles away. As far as is known, this is the first use of the "progressive" type of meet to be made anywhere in the United States.

The idea had been proposed before in Germany and, last summer, Earl Drew had suggested that this type of meet be held in the Northwest to spread interest.

The subject was brought up again at the regional SSA meeting, and was forwarded in suggestion form to the National Meeting of SSA directors held in New York in January.

The idea seemed to find favor there, and it seems to have been accepted down Texas way, as we hear talk of such a meet to be held there soon. We can take pride, however, in stating that the Northwest was the first to try it, and with great success.

Briefly, the idea is this:

The first day's operation is held at one location, in this case Wenatchee, with the major objective being

a cross-country flight to the scene of the second day's operations, Moses Lake. This is a reasonable cross-country distance, and all the participating ships are capable of making it under average conditions. Those that do not make it, and those that do not try, pack up and trailer to the scene of the second day's operations to take part in the program to be held over there.

As things turned out, only one ship made the distance on its own, but three others came to Moses Lake, one aero towing all the way, one towing half way and coasting in, and the third coming on the trailer. These four, plus two based at Moses Lake, put on a good six-ship show at that end of the line.

It is no one's fault that only one ship got through, but rather, the breaks of timing. The meet had been scheduled long in advance, and the date couldn't be changed, but all the Seattle ships were delayed in getting re-licensed and into the air, and their pilots had had no chance to get back into shape.

It is to the credit of several of the pilots that did not try it that they freely admitted that they were in no shape to try a cross-country. Caution such as this does not make headlines with long X-C flights, but on

the other hand, neither does it result in retrieves from off-airport landings, or headlines of an entirely different kind. The pilot that did get through, Pete Bowers in the Wolf, was the only Seattle pilot who had gotten in any appreciable soaring in the preceding weeks, and the practice paid off.

Cross-country was not the only way of gaining points in the meet, however, and Joe Robertson and Heasley Entz got points for altitude at Wenatchee, Joe getting to 8,000 feet in the TG-3 with Dan Terry along, and Heasley to 8,300 in his TG-2 with Ken Deckman aboard. Heasley also contributed to the "Get the Wives Flying" program by taking his wife, Betty, along for one hour and 25 minutes and getting her to 6,000 feet.

On Sunday, the Moses Lake operation began with a couple of short flights by Earl Drew and Bob Fisher, each trying out Peter Van Groen's flat-topped L-K. This later turned into a scramble of five ships circling over the airport in the same thermal for about half an hour.

Tentatively, the task for the day had been set as a return cross-country to Wenatchee, but after a look at the weather, only one ship tried it. The lake put up a heavy curtain of "No Lift" and Joe had to put the TG-3 down at Larson Air Force Base.

Two other X-C's were made in the opposite direction, however, Pete Van Green picking Ritzville, 40 miles to the east, as a goal for Silver "C" distance, and Pete picked up the same place because he had heard that he could get some parts for his Aeronca C-3 there.

The L-K and the Wolf landed at Ritzville within 15 minutes of each other. Bob Kruse in the BG-6 was ready to try the hop for his Silver "C" distance, but was unable to stay up in the small-diameter thermals that prevailed that day, even though he had soared the same ship for an hour and a quarter at Arlington the week before.

The Drew Brothers, operators of the field at which the meet was held, said that the day was very sub-standard, so the BG-6 as well as the L-K was left there and will try more soaring later.

Pete Bowers' X-C from Wenatchee reached a peak altitude of 8,200 ft., and with a moderate tail wind, produced a ground speed of 27 mph for the Wolf over the 60-mile course,



Pete Bowers and his Goppingen "Wolf" just after landing at Moses Lake, Washington, after a 60-mile X-C from Wenatchee. Contrary to the impression created by the travel and vacation ads, central Washington has some large desert areas that produce terrific soaring. Notice the terrain and the clouds in the background. The picture was taken about 5 p.m. Bowers placed first in points earned at the Northwest Soaring Meet.