

# LESZNO—AND SUBSEQUENT REFLECTIONS

by

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My general impressions of our visit to the International Gliding Contest at Leszno last June have already been described elsewhere, so I propose to give here only details and comments upon what I consider to be distinctive features.

## Tasks and Marking System

This must have been the first gliding contest in which the marks were awarded for one sole merit—*Speed*, and the tactics employed to achieve this dominated the whole meeting. The speed was measured over courses set each day by the Contest Commission, and the tasks actually accomplished were: — 100 kms. triangle (two days), out-and-return of 154 kms. and 182 kms. (two days) and a down-wind goal race of 305 kms. (one day). A contest day was defined as one in which the task was completed by at least three competitors, and this rule led to the invalidation of what was, to us visitors, the most interesting task of all, namely, a race round a 300 kms. triangle, as it was completed in extremely poor conditions by only two pilots.

One thousand marks were actually awarded daily to the fastest competitor, and the other pilots completing the course were marked in direct proportion to speed. Those failing to complete the course were marked in relation to the speed of the slowest man completing the course, their tasks being directly related to the amount of the set course which they actually succeeded in covering e.g.,

Fastest man at 50 m.p.h. gets 1000 pts.

Slowest man at 25 m.p.h. gets 500 pts.

Pilot covering only half the course gets 250 pts.

I discussed with T. Gora, who was largely responsible for the formulation of the marking system, the advisability of awarding a lower scale of marks to those failing to complete the course, emphasising the view of the B.G.A. Flying Committee that, in

racing, the main object must be to complete the course. He smilingly disagreed: "In racing," he answered, "the main object is to go fast. If you make the penalty too severe, nobody will go fast." A point of view with a truly sporting flavour.

There were two classes in the Contest: Individual and Team. The winner of the former was the pilot with

start and finish of the races, and the procedure at the turning points were as laid down by the F.A.I. requirements, and the 300-kms. triangle was proportionately similar.

## Meteorology and Topography

A met briefing was handed to the pilots each morning in a most detailed form.

*The extremely fast Russian sailplane Antonov A-9 finished 12th. It was flown by Victor Ilzenko holder of the World Two-Place distance record.*



the highest aggregate marks for the total number of contest days (five). The team award was decided by comparing the aggregate marks of the three pilots in each team; if the team had less than three pilots, no provision was made for adjusting or averaging their marks as it was evidently considered useless to speculate upon what a non-existent third pilot might or might not have done.

## Organisation and Rules

There was no handicapping, and no two-seaters were permitted. No radio was allowed.

All starts were by aero-tow, and it was usual to launch all 36 competitors in 35 minutes. Retrieving was also by air, trailers being resorted to in only exceptional cases. Checking and timing of competitors at the start and at turning points was done visually from the ground over carefully arranged lines of sight, with the aid of x 20 binoculars. The method of timing the

Information given in the first part of this was the usual particulars relating to cloud amounts, type, base and height, visibility, wind, icing, etc., etc. The second part of the form gave details of "lift" to be expected: type, characteristics, strength below cloud and inside cloud, and extent of non-thermal areas. The last part of the form asked for observations from the pilot. The details in the first two sections were divided vertically into two columns: before a certain hour, and afterwards.

In contrast to other international gliding contests, briefing seldom lasted half an hour, so that the first competitor could be launched at 09.00 hrs. if necessary.

Being centrally situated in a large land mass, and flat one at that, forecasting at Leszno avoided many of the difficulties encountered at Camp-hill. On the other hand, the technical resources available were inferior and

*(Continued on Next Page)*