



Photo: Jim Spurgeon
Paul Bikle, champion for the 2nd consecutive year with all the trophies he won.

TORREY PINES 9th ANNUAL MEET

by
JIM SPURGEON

The morning of Feb. 26 dawned with broken clouds dotting the sky, the U. S. Weather Bureau had made a special teletype for the Torrey Pines Glider meet—"overcast to broken skies with scud at 3,000 to 5,000 feet—widely scattered thundershowers throughout the day with Southwest to Westerly winds from 12 to 18 knots"—just what the doctor ordered, this was the weather break we had wished for.

There was no inversion so the glider pilots, sensing the good conditions, made haste with setting up their ships and registering. Don Stevens aero-towed in from Hemet some 100 miles to the north and reported light to heavy rain falling over the mountains.

The pilots meeting, monitored by Ted Sanford, ran off smoothly. Duke Mancuso and Warren Scheutler made brief speeches of welcome as co-chairmen of the contest. All pilots drew takeoff positions from numbers in a hat and Vern Hutchinson was first man off. The lift was very marginal so the first few ships made two or three passes along the cliff, pitched out the bomb and hit for the spot landing. By 11:25 when Don Stevens hit the air, the wind had shifted slightly and he hung on. Quickly, all the other ships in turn were launched and the race for duration was on. Don, like the rest, was below the cliff edge part of the time—rising 100 feet or so above it now and then. Stevens was being pressed by Bill Hoverman in his I-23 and Jack Gretta

in the Bowlus Baby. By 1:00 p.m., 16 gliders were soaring away, the wind had picked up and shifted almost due West, and the lift was wonderful.

Rain squalls moved through and each wetting down of the gliders dropped two or three in on the field. Each pilot had tried the bomb drop and all who had landed had tried the spot, Bikle doing the best for the day and the meet with four inches from the peg.

Through all the rain and shifting winds, Stevens, Hoverman, and Gretta hung doggedly on. Many times they would be out of sight below the cliff for 15 to 20 minutes, rising again in view as the wind picked up. Hoverman had a real fine two meter radio and we had great fun transmitting his opinions to the spectators. At first, the crowd was small but soon grew into a throng of 3,000 wet souls rooting for the boys. Over 500 cars were parked the first afternoon and all stayed on to watch the keen competition. At 4:10 a heavy line squall blew in with moderate to heavy rain—this forced ALL the gliders down, Stevens alone hanging on to the very last and landing on the beach with five other ships. After the rain stopped, the Glider Clubs' 85 hp Cub started snaking

the ships off the beach. Frank Perkins of San Diego in his Baby made the only distance off aero-tow of eight miles. Operations were secured at 5:00 p.m. and some tired and hungry lads made it off for the nearest eating spots to match tall stories of the day's activity.

Sunday morning broke with flying scud at 300 feet. The outlook was for South to Southwesterly winds of 20 to 25 knots and rain showers again promised. The pilots meeting again ran off smoothly and the contest resumed. Paul Bikle was first man off, aero towing into a stiff South wind. At 3,000 feet he cut loose and hit out for distance making Oceanside beach, 21.5 miles away, with the help of a 20 knot wind on his tail. Frank Perkins was also away for distance, making 12 miles in his Baby to Rancho Santa Fe. Bill Hoverman tried a "slickey" and headed inland to land near hi-way 395 with 13 miles. Many tries were again made for duration but all failed; the wind was too Southerly for ridge lift. Winch operations, hampered by the cross wind, made aero tows the popular launch but Bikle's flight of 21.5 miles loomed as the best try for those miles away from the site.



Harold Fawcett boards the Assoc. Glider Clubs' TG2.
Photo: Jim Spurgeon