

# THE 23rd ANNUAL NATIONAL SOARING CONTEST

(Grand Prairie — July 31st Through August 9th)

by TERRY WHITE

Texans have a penchant for bragging, as most people know, and soaring-type Texans are no exception.

Given half a chance, the average Texan will brag about anything from the state's annual oil production to its pretty girls. But it won't be necessary to discuss these two items here, since they are both known to be superior.

One item that *does* have a justified reputation among soaring people is the Texas-size thermal.

The Texas Soaring Association plans to have an adequate supply of 1500 ft/min thermals on hand for the 23rd National Soaring Contest. However, it will be up to each contestant to find his own thermals.

Dates for the Contest have been set for July 31 through August 9—beginning on a Tuesday and ending 10 days later on Thursday. This will give those contestants living in the United States adequate time to cross Texas on their trek to and from the Contest.

Texas weather records show that in past years the best soaring conditions prevail during the last two weeks of July and the first two weeks of August. Thermal activity at Grand Prairie usually starts around 10:30 or 11 a.m. and cloud bases range from 5000 feet in the morning to 9000 feet in late afternoon. Going farther west, toward Odessa or Amarillo (both "Diamond-C" distance—320 miles) cloud bases are higher, often reaching 11-22,000 feet.

Winds during the summer months blow generally from a southerly or southeasterly direction. But occasionally an easterly wind sets up ideal conditions for flights westward to Amarillo or Odessa. Two such flights were made in August 1955 from Grand Prairie. Cmdr. Nick Goodhart set a new British goal and distance record and completed the first British "Diamond-C" by soaring the 320-mile stretch to Amarillo. Later the same month, Othmar Schwarzenberg-

er soared to Odessa to set a new Swiss goal flight record and complete Swiss "Diamond-C" No. 2. So you see, there's diamonds in "them there prairies." Both flights were made in TSA's DFS Weihe.

The contest site itself is located midway between Dallas and Fort Worth, known in the vernacular as "Big-D" and "Cowtown." Grand Prairie is the home of Chance Vought Aircraft Corporation and Temco Aircraft Corporation as well as several smaller industries. Located as the city is between two major cities, many

Division, Texas National Guard, and with the Civil Air Patrol. The Guard unit commander has stated that no training activities will be held during the contest.

As stated in TSA's bid for the 23rd Nationals, TSA will guarantee at least \$1000 in attainable goal prizes divided into two groups, "high-performance" and "other" sailplanes. A map accompanying this article shows the goals and amounts for the 1952 19th Nationals.

Entry fee has been set at \$15 per glider and one free tow will be provided each glider for each contest day. To encourage glider-guiders from far-away places to come to the 23rd Nationals, TSA has set up a \$1000 travel fund which will be distributed among participating sailplanes normally based more than 300 airline miles from Grand Prairie. However, to be eligible for the travel fund, the glider's final contest points must equal or exceed 25 per cent of the average points accrued by the top three pilots. Also, the fund will be paid only for mileage traveled within the continental United States.

Additional and later information on the 23rd Nationals will appear in the May-June issue of SOARING.

Meanwhile, everyone planning to compete in or attend the Contest should arrange with the boss for a two-week vacation. We use the term "vacation" advisedly here, for a contest is hard work for pilots and crews.

There is a feeling of satisfaction that comes from having done one's best in a contest that well compensates for all the hard work of retrieves and long cross-country flights.

Texas Soaring Association has well-laid plans for making the 23rd National Soaring Contest an event that will be long remembered by everyone taking part.



Grand Prairie airport as it appeared at the start of the 19th annual National Soaring Contest in 1952.

Grand Prairians commute to their jobs in Dallas and Fort Worth.

The Lennox Hotel in downtown Grand Prairie is only a mile and a half from the airport, and good meals can be had at the hotel coffee shop. Wyatt's Cafeteria offers reasonably-priced meals to the eat-and-run pilots and crews.

Those who attended the '50 and '52 contests are familiar with the Grand Prairie Airport facilities. But for those who will make their first Texas contest, here is a brief run-down on the field: It is an ex-Navy training field with a 3200-foot N-S runway. A large mat, formerly used for a gasoline dump, provides an adequate tie-down area. Steel rings are imbedded in the concrete. No hangar space will be provided, mainly because none is available. TSA shares the field with the Air Section of the 49th Armored