

# THE 23rd ANNUAL U.S. NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 23rd Annual U. S. National Soaring Championships at Grand Prairie, Texas promise to be the largest and most keenly contested in American Soaring history, if the number of affirmative replies to a recent questionnaire is any indication.

So far about 60 soaring pilots have indicated their intention to compete in this contest and about 15 or 20 more who have not returned the questionnaire have indicated from other correspondence that they will be competing, too. Allowing for the usual percentage of those who, for one reason or another, will be unable to make the trip when the time comes, the number of certainties can be expected to exceed 70.

Several new sailplane designs will make their competitive debut at Grand Prairie, including Harland Ross' R-6 two place high-performance ship, Don Mitchell's Nimbus III, two or three of Gus Briegleb's BG12's, one of which will be flown by Paul Bikle, Stan Hall's Cherokee II, and the Backstrom-Easley-Powell "Flying Plank."

Of the old brigade the most prominent will be the RJ-5 flown by its new owner, Graham Thompson. Stan Smith, of course, will be flying his Schweizer 1-21 and, although they haven't said so, it can be taken for granted that Paul Schweizer will be flying his 1-23 and Larry Gehrlein his extreme modification of what was once a 1-23.

Also prominent will be the German-built entries. So far, 3 Weihs, 2 Olympias and 1 Minimoa can be counted, four of these ships being based at Grand Prairie. Two Nelson Hummingbirds, various Schweizer 1-23's, umpteen 1-26's and various modifications of Pratt-Reads, LK's, TG-2's and TG-3's have all said they will come so, if nothing else, at least there will be variety.

The Rules and Regulations for the Championships have been thrown back and forward between the TSA Rules Committee and the SSA Rules Committee and the next bounce to TSA's side of the court will indicate that they have been approved by the big guns up at SSA.

The approved version of the Rules will be published in the July-August issue of SOARING which you will receive around July 1st but in any case they will be mailed to all prospective competitors before that date.

Task flying has been adopted as a means of reducing the fantastic amount of retrieving which would otherwise be expected, and on only two days during the contest will pilots have the chance of flying those great distances which have been a feature of previous contests in this area. Not to deny them the opportunity, however, it has been arranged that all goal prizes not won during the contest will be available for three days immediately after the contest and launching facilities and communications will be maintained so that pilots can attempt the Diamond distance or better, and perhaps pick up some of that green stuff at the same time. It will probably be the only sign of green they will see in Texas at that time of year!

The goal prizes available for the 19th Nationals in 1952 totaled over \$2,000 and a like amount will be offered this year.

Another novel feature for contests in this country is that every contest day will count toward the pilot's final score and the worst day will not be dropped as in previous contests.

Come what may, Sunday, August 5th will be a rest day and no contest flying will take place. There are two reasons for this; it is hoped to have an open day on the Saturday and the rest will be needed by most people but, more important, Marshall Claybourn, Spectator Events Chairman, has arranged an air show for that day.

This air show will be one of the high-lights of the 23rd Nationals and will include static displays of civil and military aircraft and components manufactured in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, as well as displays by local dealers representing companies further afield.

Overhead, fly-bys by military aircraft and demonstrations of helicopter versatility will punctuate the

presence of a full-blown air age, and the public will witness such things as centre-of-gravity winch-towing technique, thermal soaring, sailplane aerobatics and all the other events one usually associates with a first-class air show. It is hoped, too, to show something which not many people have seen; that is, a bale-out from a two-place sailplane.

Social activities are being planned for the evenings of task days when all pilots and crews will be back at the base early and will not be fagged-out from a long retrieve. These social activities will range from a Texas-style "watermelon bust" to the more sedate lawn party. You can name anything else you want somewhere between those extremes and you'll have it, too.

We are happy with the very large response we have had from the questionnaire you all received about the beginning of April but, as usual, there are those who just haven't got around to returning their completed questionnaires. Some will have thrown them in the waste-paper basket, others have stuffed them in their pending trays while others have lost them in their piles of unanswered mail. It will be of the greatest assistance to you and to us if you will right now, as you are reading this, get hold of that questionnaire, put your name on it, indicate your intentions and stick it in the mail.

All the returned questionnaires have been sorted out and have been handed over to June Wyberg and Terry White who will handle them from now on. Those of you who have said you will come will receive, as soon as we get around to it, all the necessary information concerning the Nationals, including a copy of the Rules and Regulations as approved by the SSA Rules Committee, and information concerning available accommodation facilities and prices, etc. Others who are not coming, but who have asked to be kept on the list will be sent the same information.

Time is getting short and we have much work to do to organize for what will probably be the biggest contest ever, but you can rest assured that the bigger the challenge the better TSA members will work together to make this the best and most enjoyable contest you have ever attended.

Any inquiries you may have concerning the Nationals should be addressed to Mr. Terry White, Contest Publicity Chairman, 3619 Dorothy Street, Dallas, Texas.