

# 1957 NORTHWEST INTERNATIONAL SOARING MEET

by PETER M. BOWERS

The Third Northwest International Soaring Meet held at Wenatchee, Washington, carried on the "Biggest and Best" tradition by having thirteen ships on hand, of which eleven were in competition. Division by ships was as follows: 5 L-K's, 3 1-26's, 2 TG-2's, 1 TG-3, 1 Olympia, 1 1-19.

As in previous years, the contest was divided into two classes by performance, with ships in the class of the "Cinema" and below being in Class II. Only one ship competed in this class this year. The best performances in Class I were turned in by very clean Bunny-nose L-K's and the Olympia. Except in Class II, no points were given for anything but distance, or speed over a particular distance in cases where two or more ships completed the same distance task.

The contest ran for a full week, starting Sunday, June 30th, and continuing through Saturday, July 6th. Pilot's meetings were held each morning after the task committee meeting so that all could be informed of the task and briefed on the weather. The Weather Bureau supplied its information through a special State Patrol teletype. In general, the tasks were well suited to the prevailing weather and the abilities of the contestants, and the contestants were satisfied with them.

Also as usual, the contest was won by the "Paul Bikles of the Northwest," the brothers Bob and Bill Fisher, who teamed up in their superslick Bunny-nose L-K. The various daily tasks are enumerated as follows:

## Sunday, June 30th

15 mile triangle—as many times around as possible. Bob Moore of Richmond won this in his bunny-nose L-K while carrying a passenger, a CAA agent whom he managed to get thoroughly sick in the course of three circuits of the course. Four other pilots made it around twice, and two made it once. Although turning points were within sight of the

field, observers were stationed at each point to identify the ships as they turned.

## Monday, July 1st

200 mile goal and return, Wenatchee to Davenport and back. Won by Bob Fisher, the only pilot to complete the task, with Joe Robertson in the Olympia coming down 18 miles short for second. Pete Bowers, Bob Kruse, and Bob Moore all landed at Davenport when they saw that return was impossible, but Arlen Moore got about three miles on the homeward leg with a straight glide from over the Davenport airport for third place. No witnesses were stationed at the turning point this time, photographic evidence of the turn being accepted. Each contestant was required to photograph the start



Photo: Peter M. Bowers

board before take-off. As the illustration shows, this gave the date, the task, the name of the pilot and the name and number of his ship, plus the official SSA Observer's name. This system worked to perfection.

## Tuesday, July 2nd

95 mile goal and return to Mansfield. Of eight pilots attempting this task, six completed it. Another actually flew a greater distance but was not credited with a completion because he landed at the adjacent airport when he couldn't make the home field from his position when the lift gave out. Fisher won on the basis of the fastest time for the distance, followed by Joe Robertson and Bob Moore.

## Wednesday, July 3rd

Open. All weather reports indicated that this was the day for distance, so it was declared an open day. However, things turned out otherwise, with Robertson in the Olympia making 142 miles closely followed by Bob Fisher in the L-K. Bowers and McClanahan in 1-26's made 25 and 24 miles, respectively. Bob Kruse came down at the next airport, five miles away, and called in for an aero tow back home. He released over the ridge, and ended up with a duration flight of nearly eight hours that also gained him his Gold C altitude. He reached over 14,000 feet in an extremely weak evening wave that at times gave a rate of climb of only one-third of a foot per minute. However, since he had declared a goal of Coeur D'Alene in Idaho, his crew started in that direction as soon as he made his first take-off. When they called in, they were repeatedly told that he was still flying, but the informant neglected to say that he was right over the field. The crew didn't get the right word until 150 miles out.

## Thursday, July 4th

Silver C triangle. Only one pilot, Bob Moore, completed this one. Bob Fisher was second with 14 miles, and Dean Reynolds of the Motorless Flight Associates was third with 8. However, the day had other things to offer. Wilson Ribiero used Pete Bowers' 1-26 to get his 5-hour Silver C duration, stretching it to 6 hours in the process of reaching 14,000 feet in the afternoon wave. Dean Reynolds, who carried his oxygen mask upon the forceful insistence of his partners, reached 19,300 feet in the same wave after having worked into the base of it from a fairly low point in front of the ridge. Ribiero had been slope soaring for most of his five hours before turning out over the river valley and catching the low point of the wave.

## Friday, July 5th

80 mile goal and return to Mans-