

1959 TORREY PINES MEET

Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.

Condensed from TED SANFORD'S Scorer's Report.

The story of the 13th Annual Pacific Coast Midwinter Soaring Championships covers a total of four days on two consecutive week-ends. Originally scheduled for the weekend of February 21st and 22nd, it had to be reluctantly postponed on the morning of the 21st to the following weekend when it became apparent that the excessive California dew (rain) would not abate. Ironically, it was only the second major precipitation of the season and has been followed by drought ever since.

Nevertheless, a large crowd attended the planned dinner and entertainment the first Saturday evening. Various out of town pilots were called upon to speak words of wisdom, choicest of which came from Joe Lincoln who headed up the Phoenix, Arizona, contingent. They dealt with his threat to charge whoever was benefiting from his rain-making prowess; it seems the only other time he had come was two years ago when similar circumstances prevailed.

A brief shower or two Sunday morning was followed by clearing skies and a soarable wind on the cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the Torrey Pines Gliderport north of San Diego. The hosts, the Associated Glider Clubs of Southern California, Ltd., very graciously made free winch and aero tows available to the ships in attendance for an all-day practice session. Joe Lincoln in his 1-23D, Paul Bikle in his

1-23E and many others were able to obtain flights lasting over an hour, making up, to some extent, for the trip to San Diego and inability to attend the following weekend. Those who could return were given hangar space for their trailered ships at a nearby airport.

Saturday the 28th dawned clear and calm except for some maritime haze that occasionally thickened to fog. Thirty pilots registered to fly the 21 sailplanes that showed up. Without further ado, a pilots' meeting was held to brief everyone on rules and procedures. The first winch tow was then made by Rich Eggleston in the Soarcers' P-R at 1100. With only a slight breeze blowing, it was just up to drop a bomb and down for a spot landing. A few of the next ten pilots to follow made hopeless efforts to find sufficient ridge lift but ended up on the beach for their gamble. No sooner had towplanes gone down for them than the fog moved in over the entire gliderport and operations were suspended for two hours until the shroud withdrew. Jim Spurgeon on the P.A. system did a good job in the interim keeping the many thousands of spectators interested enough to wait it out.

At 1400 it was clear enough to resume the clockwork-like winch operation and numerous pilots took aero tows for distance attempts. Larry Bell flying dual squeezed best L/D out of his flat-top L-K in

a 14.1 mile glide inland. The ripple-free nature of his flight was typical for all who tried X-C.

Increasingly better marks for the precision events kept interest up throughout the first day. Spot landings to the center of a 40' radius scoring circle progressed from John C. Linn's 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches with the Soarcers' P-R to John Williams' 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches near the end of the day in the AGCSC 1-26. Dave McNay in his flat-top 1-26 was one of the first to get a decent mark in the 40 foot radius scoring circle of the bomb drop event: 21 feet from the center. Lloyd Licher bettered this from his Schweizer 1-7 bombing platform with a mark of 13 feet and then, on the last flight of the day, missed the stake by only 3.4 feet.

The busy day at the field was followed by a pleasant evening together at a pizza house in San Diego where Herman Stiglmeier and Jim Spurgeon took the dinner orders. After eating, movies by the local club and hangar flying rounded out the entertainment.

Sunday, March 1st, dawned with clear blue skies, a warm sun and the calm of the March lamb. There were still points to score in spite of no wind, however, so the methodical winch operation began once more at 1015 and averaged one launching every 3.7 minutes for the next five hours and forty-five minutes. It is a credit to the operations crew that there were no wire breaks on any of the 150 winch tows made during the meet and that the ships were handled very efficiently on the ground. This was a contributing factor to a very safe contest unmarred by a single accident or incident. The spectators certainly enjoyed the many flights and spot landings.

It soon became apparent that only the bomb drop, spot landing, altitude and X-C events would be scorable, thus minimizing the effect of high-performance ships and emphasizing pilot skill and luck. Scoring was as follows: for bomb drop, distance from center of target (in feet) subtracted from 40; for spot landing, distance from spot (in inches) subtracted from 40; for altitude, one point per 100 feet of altitude attained a.s.l. on or from winch tow (take-off site is 375 feet a.s.l.), if 600 feet a.s.l. or more was attained; for cross-country, one point per mile if from aero tow (release altitude 3000 feet above the field) or two points per mile if from winch

A low sun backlights the waves below and the 1-26 flown by Jack Lambie at Torrey Pines.

Photo: Rose Marie Licher

