

CHOOSING THE 1960 U.S. SOARING TEAM

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For the third successive time, the U.S. team has been selected by a seeding committee comprising the top ten American contenders in the last two U.S. Nationals (open class), plus pilots of the last World competition team. Each of these pilots is asked to rate all of the others on the list according to his estimate of their competitive ability, assigning no. 1 to first choice, 2 to second, etc.

Rating sheets are in effect secret ballots, which are mailed to the SSA offices and collated by tellers appointed for this task by the SSA President. As a measure of the importance attached to this part of the process, Harner Selvidge and Ted Sharp tallied the scores this year. Final ratings represent a summation of all relative rating numbers assigned to each pilot; the lower the "score," the higher one's position is on the list. Individual rating sheets are kept on file by the SSA, and are available for examination by any SSA Officer or Director.

The current U.S. Champion is automatically the number one pilot on the World competition team, and is not rated in the seedings. He does, however, rate all of the other pilots. Provision is made for scoring "write-in" candidates, also.

The first 10 seeded candidates and their scores are published in SOARING magazine. Places on the team are assigned in order of this relative ranking. A questionnaire is sent with each ballot to determine each candidate's intention of participating, if chosen, so that the next ranking candidate can be assigned the team position in the event of a negative answer.

The questionnaire also covers such pertinent factors as the degree of financial self-sufficiency, what type of sailplane the pilot has available, availability of crew and tow-car, preference for Standard vs. Open class competition, etc. None of these factors governs the choice of the team, though lack of collected monies or free transportation may force later withdrawal of candidates or require that equipment be rented or borrowed abroad.

Another item on the questionnaire covers the willingness of the candidate to serve as a crew member in the event he is not chosen as a pilot.

It is considered highly desirable that all pilots who may compete in future years get some experience with the special situations and frustrations which accompany competition in a foreign land. The ultimate choice of crew is necessarily the decision of each pilot; the questionnaire is intended to help establish a pool of competent and willing volunteers.

A great many alternative methods for choosing a team have been put forward at various times, ranging from point systems which accumulate standings in local, regional, national and international competition to committees of SSA comprised of non-eligible pilots who would weigh all of the qualifications of prospective team members. The accumulation of points from various contests might favor the pilot with excessive time and money, quite independent of competitive ability, and could not take into account the wide differences in competitive situations and rules which presently exist in U.S. local and regional competitions. The non-eligible pilot committee might indeed do a good job of team selection, but would inevitably be open to charges of favoritism, etc., and would probably be obliged to assume an attitude of continuous defensiveness.

The system outlined above is straightforward and eminently democratic in principle. Its success depends upon the good judgement and sense of fairness of our best active competition pilots in rating one another. As a measure of how well this has been done this year, look at the results below. We can all be proud of the team which will represent us in Germany in 1960.

SEEDING RESULTS

The 1st 10 pilots and scores are:

1. Richard H. Johnson	0
2. Richard E. Schreder	42
3. Paul F. Bikle	64
4. Lyle A. Maxey	66
5. Andrew J. Smith	131
6. Harold D. Hutchinson	135
7. Francis B. Compton	140
8. Paul A. Schweizer	144
9. Bernard M. Carris	166
10. Christopher M. Drew	184

All of the above candidates have expressed a definite interest in competing in Germany in the 1960 World

Soaring Championships. All have stated that they will be able to spend the required time for travel, practice and actual competition, estimated as 5 weeks. Varying levels of self-support have been indicated. Four of the first 5 seeded have suitable ships on hand or under construction.

At this time the number of entries per country has not been stipulated by the contest organizers. No doubt there will be not fewer than 2 entries nor more than 4.

It appears that Dick Johnson and Dick Schreder are certain to represent the U.S. in the forthcoming Championships, with a strong likelihood that Paul Bikle and possibly Lyle Maxey will be on the team as well.

An Open Appeal

An open appeal to all avid followers of soaring flight:

The Soaring Society of America is finally off the ground with the AMERICAN SOARING HANDBOOK. It has been a long take-off run, but momentum has been built up and with adequate cooperation and support from all soaring enthusiasts, a successful landing will be made in the months to come, with an outstanding contribution of American soaring know-how and wisdom to the world wide soaring arena.

The total degree of success of the AMERICAN SOARING HANDBOOK will greatly depend upon YOUR willingness to contribute your specific energies and abilities to the backbone of donated abilities that make up the AMERICAN SOARING HANDBOOK effort. Specifically, our prime need is to elicit the contributing support of the enthusiastic and omnipresent photographers, in all of their shades and colors and ranges of abilities, who follow the soaring fraternity and so completely document its exciting activities. Throughout this community of camera wielding enthusiasts is a wealth of soaring coverage that is not only deserving of publication, but to date is laying dormant in private archives. This untapped photographic coverage of soaring activities can be the difference between an outstanding AMERICAN SOARING HANDBOOK and one that is only acceptable.

It is the intention that the AMERICAN SOARING HANDBOOK utilize a maximum amount of illustrative material, photographs everywhere we can possibly squeeze them in, to clarify, to amplify and just plain dramatize the important material be-