

ELSINORE FALL SOARING CONTEST

Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.

Condensed from a report by DAVE McNAY

The Elsinore Fall Soaring Contest was sponsored this year by the Southern California Soaring Association over the three day Labor Day weekend, September 3rd, 4th and 5th, at Skylark Field, Elsinore, Calif.

On Saturday, September 3rd, after a great deal of procrastinating by the task setters in the relaxed atmosphere of registration, tow ticket buying, waiver signing, etc., a 96 mile task to Gilman Hot Springs and return was set. Since Gilman lay only 24 miles to the northeast, twice around the course was required. With the excellent weather provided by a tropical disturbance off lower California, the task proved to be a bit too easy for six of the contestants who all finished with better than 34 mph speeds. The best was 44.2 mph by Graham Thomson in his beautiful white Ka-6CR. Frank Green and Jim McCarrier thought once was enough and landed after the first go 'round.

Sunday, September 4th, looked very much like the previous day as far as weather was concerned so a more ambitious task of three laps around a 52 mile triangle was set. The three turning points were Murieta Hot Springs, Homeland (near Ryan Field) and Inspiration Point on the ridge west of Elsinore. The task was to start and end at Skylark Field. This 156 mile task for speed managed to weed out the front running pack considerably as well as bring forward a new contender.

Frank Green surprised mostly himself with a spectacular 38.4 mph for second best speed of the day. Frank was sighted over the Sedco Hills quite low after completing the second lap. He radioed for his crew to return to Skylark Field as he just was not about to make another lap. As he approached the Skylark runway, he struck a small weak thermal and started circling. To all the expert soaring pilots observing from the narrow shade of the hangar front, it was obvious that Frank just was not making the best of the thermal. Chuck Moore proceeded to talk Frank around the circle telling him exactly when to roll in a little more turn or move a little to one side or the other. The thermalling improved and Frank and Chuck started to win the battle against gravity. As Chuck called the instructions louder and louder, Frank rose higher and higher until he was last seen speeding away on course for a very fast last lap. Those at the hangar watching gave Chuck a "well done" since, you see, he was not using the radio!

As a result of delayed take-offs caused by a tow plane fiasco (one of the three tugs blew a head gasket and another taxied into a runway marker), the last sailplane was not airborne until 1400. Graham Thomson was the last off and came close to not completing the 156 mile task. At 1730 all ships were accounted for except Graham's Ka-6. Since Graham

had no radio, there was nothing to do but wait and watch as the sun sank over the coast range to the west. At 1830 a white speck was sighted rising slowly from behind the Sedco Hills. Field glasses soon verified that the tiny speck was the graceful Ka-6 making the best of an evening thermal to start that long last glide at maximum L/D. The ground observers watched in amazement as Graham finally rolled out and slid effortlessly toward the final turning point. It appeared that the Ka-6 flew straight and level for the 15 miles to the last turn at Inspiration Point where it flashed in the setting sun as Graham banked sharply for the final high speed dive across the finish line at 1847.

A short triangular course of 35.5 miles was set for the last competition on Labor Day. The task was to fly as many miles as possible around the course in a three hour period, beginning at 1330. Sailplanes were launched early and permitted to gain as much altitude as possible but not to cross the field on course until after 1330. This form of start was to encourage true regatta style racing and several exciting races did develop among small groups of fairly well matched sailplanes. At the end of the timing period, all sailplanes still in the air made their way back to Skylark Field for the awards presentation.

In all, five prizes were awarded, silver bowls to first and second place in each of two groups (A and B, sailplanes of over and under 25 to 1 glide ratio, respectively) and a beautiful statuette of a bird in flight was donated by Anna Saudek and presented to Jim McCarrier for the best performance by a pilot of less than Silver C standing. Places and scores follow.

GROUP A

Thomson, G	Ka-6CR	2879
Williams, J.	1-23	2765
Proenneke, R.	Cherokee II	2580
Green, Frank	GT-1	2191

GROUP B

Lambie, Jack	Fauvel	2394
North, DeVaughn	1-26	1710
Meckoll, Jim	L-K	971
Stanford, Ted	BG-7	922
Walters, Carl	TG-2	920
McCarrier, Jim	TG-2	827
Salkeld, Ed	L-K	427

During the entire three day contest, not one contestant required a second launch. Also, a rather impressive total distance of 2769 cross-country miles were soared by the contestants in the competition.



Graham Thomson and his Ka-6CR, winners of the Elsinore Fall Soaring Contest.

Photo: Lloyd M. Licher