

NORTHEASTERN STATES SOARING MEET

*Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.
Condensed from a report by JIM GRAY*

Once again the Elmira Area Soaring Corporation had the pleasure of sponsoring the "Northeastern" at Harris Hill over the July 4th weekend. Howard Trampenau was Contest Director and many other Elmira regulars assisted in the organization and operations of the Meet.

As usual, pilots, crews and sailplanes began arriving on the Hill Friday afternoon and evening. Details of cabin rental, registration, tie-downs and hangar space were dispatched amid the greetings, laughter and good-natured jibes of soaring people returning to a familiar site.

By Saturday morning, July 2nd, 21 pilots and 18 ships were officially entered, including a 1-20, a 2-22C, 4 1-23 series, 9 1-26's, the 1-29, an L-K and a BG-12A.

First Day

A favorable weather report resulted in a task of goal and return to Tri-Cities Airport at Endicott, N.Y., being selected, a total distance of 82 miles. It appeared that Harris Hill was still under the influence of a high pressure area which would not move out for another 12 to 24 hours. Winds were WNW with ground temperatures expected to rise above 80 degrees. Predicted cloud base was 4500 ft. and good lift was expected.

Outside, as the cu started developing, pilots began selecting later and later take-off times in order to take advantage of the better conditions expected after one o'clock. The strategy was seen as some pilots waited for the strong competitors to select first. It was hoped that the later ones could spot their thermals by the spiraling of the early risers. Ha! Nature didn't cooperate.

By one o'clock a large mass of towering cumulus had appeared to the west and Bernie Carris was one of the pilots who had selected a take-off time which seemed to coincide with the arrival of the cu over Harris Hill. By 3:30 P.M. all ships had been launched. Reports had already started coming in from downed pilots who ran into large areas of sink en-route to Endicott. Bill Ivans put down at the turn point and others landed at Waverly, Owego and points between. Some had rounded the turn but were landing on the way home.

The communications personnel were busy answering telephones, questions and demands for information. The tension began building when it was seen that several pilots had take-off cards still posted on the ops board. Still missing at 5 P.M. were Bernie Carris and two others trying for straight out FAI award distance. Soon, a tiny, rapidly approaching speck was seen at good altitude east of Harris Hill. Before long it was identified as a 1-23H, and very shortly it entered a high speed pattern with Bernie at the controls and spoiled in for a perfect landing at the flight line. Second place behind Bernie came Joe Perrucci in a 1-26 who had taken off at nearly 11:30 to make a slow but sure flight to the turn and nearly back.

Doc Bundy was third with a flight around the point and part-way back in a 1-23D. Bernie got caught in a big area of sink at Tri-Cities. Seems he had put up the speed a bit and outran his good conditions, arriving ahead of them. He polished a ridge for an hour before thermalling away.

Second Day

This day was a total loss because of line storms and high winds which were causing damage to the south of Elmira. Pilots prudently placed their ships on the trailers and waited for conditions to improve. The day

was spent resting, eating, visiting and generally relaxing. Late in the afternoon winds increased to 30 or 40 mph with some sections of the state reporting hurricane velocity gusts.

Third Day

The contest committee decided to have a task for today in order that Bernie would have to fly to win: goal and return to Costa's airport at Painted Post, a total distance of 24 miles. In order to make things interesting, the point system for scoring was revised, being weighted to compensate for the decreased distance, thus allowing pilots to achieve good overall scores in comparison to the previous day's high points. Bernie, Joe and the Bovenkerk/Bundy team would have to fly and fly well if they wanted to win.

Well, guess who completed the task? Bernie again, with Hal Bovenkerk and Dale Gustin in second and third spots respectively. So it should be easy to fly from Harris Hill to Painted Post, eh? You should have seen the sailplanes spotted up and down the valley between Corning and Elmira. Joe Perrucci landed at the Costa strip and waited for an aero tow home. Paul Schweizer completed the round trip in the best time of the day but was not competing.

Prizes were awarded on the field after all competitors had returned. The Northeastern Meet was over.

Champion — Bernie Carris

Second Place — Hal Bovenkerk

Third Place Open and

1-26 Champion — Joe Perrucci

First Place Team Award

—F. Bundy and H. Bovenkerk

Contest Director Howard Trampenau presents the Championship trophy to winner Bernie Carris. Looking on are, from L to R, 1-26 Class winner Joe Perrucci, and Hal Bovenkerk and Dr. Francis Bundy, winners of the team title.

Photo: Elmira Star-Gazette

