



## THE NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Observers and pilots alike were unanimously of the opinion that the 27th Annual U.S. National Soaring Championships just concluded at Odessa were outstanding in the smoothness and efficiency of the operation. Field operations, launching and task setting were carried out in a remarkably effective fashion. The TSA and Odessa people are to be congratulated for their success.

At the annual summer meeting of the SSA Board of Directors, held at the conclusion of the meet, future Nationals' plans were discussed. In the past, this has been done at the January Directors' meeting but it was felt that more notice of rules changes would be desired by prospective competitors. Actually, few changes were voted, but this in itself is of interest.

From the trashpile of dented egos among the also-rans at Odessa came the universal comment that the competition at this meet was the highest caliber ever experienced at a U.S. Championship. This was attributed in great part to the new entrance requirement of a Gold C distance leg. With few exceptions, all of the 36 entrants were seriously competing every day.

The question of the purpose of the National Championship contest has been discussed at numerous meetings of the SSA Directors. They are almost unanimous in feeling that this contest is to pick the best pilot as U.S. National Soaring Champion, improve the design of sailplanes, improve our knowledge of meteorology *and for no other purposes.*

The U.S. National Championship is *not* held for the purpose of helping pilots to get additional badges or diamonds; giving them experience in competition; or bringing publicity to the sponsoring group. All three of these are laudable goals, but in the past have consistently been found to interfere with the primary objectives. The Directors are trying to eliminate these conflicts.

At Odessa the Directors voted to retain the Gold C distance leg requirement for entrance in the 1961 contest. Someday we might be able to have regional elimination or qualification contests, but none of the dozens of such schemes proposed so far have come even close to being satisfactory. This year, if a contestant deliberately disregarded a set task he could be assigned to the end of the take-off order for the remainder of the contest. In 1961 he will be dropped from the contest forthwith.

Next year we will continue to score the OSTIV Standard Class ships along with the others as was done in Odessa this year. A special trophy will be given for the best performance in this class, and if a Standard Class pilot has the highest score he will be the U.S. National Champion. Radios will be permitted in these ships. SSA is also going to recommend to FAI that these same changes be made in the International Championships in 1962.

Letters will shortly be sent to all soaring clubs in the U.S.A. asking them if they wish to sponsor the 1961 Nationals. With the greatly increased help that SSA is able to give sponsors, this task is not as difficult as in the past and it is our hope that we will have several bids to choose from. How about hearing from *your* group?

—H. S.