

# 27th ANNUAL U. S. NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

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Photos by E. J. REEVES

The 27th Nationals were held at the Ector County Airport, Odessa, Texas, from August 2-11, 1960. The Odessa Chuck Wagon Gang, a group in the Chamber of Commerce, sponsored the contest and it was sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.

Winner of the contest and new U.S. National Soaring Champion is Richard E. Schreder of Toledo, Ohio, who flew his original design HP-8 sailplane. He earned a perfect score on six of the seven contest days and had 945 on the other for a total of 6945 out of a possible 7000. He had also won the championship in 1958.

A number of pilots spent some days before the contest at Odessa practicing or trying to earn the Gold C distance leg in order to qualify for entry. Fritz Sebek was successful in the latter respect.

A comprehensive briefing on rules, scoring and operations was conducted by contest personnel on Monday evening for those pilots who had arrived early.

## Tuesday, August 2nd First Contest Day

Thirty-three qualified pilots were on hand for the first day of competition, including three Canadians and Philip Wills from England. They had a formidable array of sailplanes to fly (see table of scores).

E. J. Reeves M.C.'d the brief opening ceremonies. Welcomes were ex-

tended by the mayor and representatives of the JC's, C of C and Chuck Wagon Gang, after which numerous of the contest officials were introduced. Philip Wills brought greetings from England and expressed a lament that his body might be on the platform but his spirit was up with the many cumulus clouds that had just begun to form.

With that, attempts began on the task of the day, a 132 mile triangular speed course with turning points at Andrews County Airport, 30 mi. north, and Wink Airport, 49 mi. west. Principal turn point observers throughout the contest were Mr. & Mrs. McNay from Wichita and TSA's Bill Idom.

Winds were generally south, 25 knots down low, 15 knots above 8000 feet. Thermals were good enough for twenty-seven pilots to complete the course. Chief timer Al Backstrom clocked Schreder in with fastest time of 52.6 mph. Coder was a close second in the Sisu I with 49.6 mph. Wills commented that it was immoral to waste such good soaring weather on a short task.

Joe Emons made a non-contest flight in his L-K 205 mi. north to Hereford to earn Gold C distance and Diamond C goal, thus qualifying to enter the competition on the following day.

## Wednesday, August 3rd Second Contest Day

New fare for U.S. pilots, a distance task: 75.5 mi. WSW to Pecos

then back on a line through the start point as far as possible.

The 34 sailplanes were launched in 54 minutes by six of the seven towplanes available. Two-minute intervals were scheduled and always equalled or bettered. The separate towplane landing strip adjacent to and downwind of the take-off runway, 65 available tow lines manipulated by four eager Wing Scouts and members of the Odessa Boy's Club, all under the experienced supervision of line chief Phil Easley, played an important part in this achievement. A temporary FAA tower was on the field for the contest, manned by very cooperative controllers. As each tow was ready to go, Roy Schlemeyer of Odessa would wave a flag and the tower would flash a green light. It would be well to give a full measure of credit to the tow pilots at this point. Ken Jacobs of TSA was chief and most of the others had a lot of towing experience, Charlie Adkisson, Ed Butts, Bob Davis, John Hall, Al Parker, Chuck Schmid and Jessie Womack.

Meanwhile, back with the contestants, good thermals allowed five to exceed 300 miles and 22 others to exceed 200, in spite of a strong crosswind. Schreder again garnered the 1000 points, this time with 338 miles. A. J. Smith was second with 332, Wills third with 322 and Drew fourth with 321, all Diamond C distance legs, Wills' completing his badge after 10 years of trying. Otto

Ector County Airport, site of the 1960 Nationals, looking SE. Large graded square was for sailplane landings, graded runway at left for landing towplanes bringing them right up to head of take-off line.



The 1960 U.S. National Soaring Champion, Richard E. Schreder of Toledo, Ohio, with his all-metal, original design HP-8 sailplane and family crew of wife Angie, two boys and young daughter.

