

# NORTHWEST INTERNATIONAL SOARING CONTEST

*Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.*

*by ROBERT KRUSE*

The Sixth Annual Northwest International Soaring Contest, at Fancher Field, Wenatchee, Washington, got off to a prophetic start on Monday, July 3rd, with only two ships finishing the task laid out by the Task Committee. The weather report was fair but it looked bad according to the local pundits.

Six sailplanes and seven pilots were entered in Class I: Earl Menefee from Palo Alto, Calif. (Musger 23), George Asdel of Sunnyvale, Calif. (Cherokee), Bob Moore of Richland (1-21), Al Wilson of Seattle (Weihe), Al McDonald of Portland, Oregon (L-K), and Frank Woodward and Joe Robertson of Seattle (team flying their Ka-6). Pete Geschwinder of Vancouver, British Columbia, flying a BG-12A upheld the "International" end of the entrance list. Jim Hard of Richland, flying his 1-19 turned out to be the only entrant in Class II when George Asdel decided he would give the big stuff a run for their money. Rudy Allemann and Paul Pallmer came up for the fun of it but were not entered in the contest.

Organization of the contest was up to the standards of the previous years; however, one factor tended to put the damper on the meet as such. A literal application of the Nationals Rules, which included Sec. 5.3, defining a contest day as one in which at least five pilots must fly a minimum of fifty miles, made every day a no-contest day. This was admittedly an unfortunate ruling when applied to a small contest. In the end, points were scored as if all days counted and the trophies were awarded on that basis.

The meet was a success otherwise with the completion of two Silver C badge requirements, three Diamond goal flights made and one Gold C altitude climb recorded.

## Monday, July 3rd

The task committee set a task of 111 miles around a triangle to Lake Chelan, Ephrata and return for speed points. The pilots all groaned and tried to promote a no-contest day. The Contest Director held out though, so the towing started about 3:00 PDT. Apparently that was all that was needed, Earl Menefee and

Bob Moore completed the task, Paul Pallmer and Rudy Allemann (both non-contestants) made it to Lake Chelan and on to Ephrata. Al Wilson flew to the lake and returned to Fancher, MacDonald went to the lake and back as far as Waterville. George Asdel struggled to the lake and landed there while Joe Robertson flustered to earth in a bean field at Quincy, only 21 miles out. According to the rules, it was a no-contest day.

Scores: Menefee-1000, Moore-940, McDonald-211, Wilson-200, Asdel-162 and Robertson-103.

## Tuesday, July 4th

The weather report looked extremely good. The task committee took a deep breath and announced a 224 mile triangle from Fancher to Electric City (Grand Coulee Dam) to Ritzville and return. Bob Moore and Rudy Allemann made it around by getting to the dam area before the bottom dropped soggly out of a big cumulo-nimbus and flattened the air underneath. Robertson got there 20 minutes after the leaders and squeaked through, reached Ritzville an hour after Allemann and Moore but was unable to get back across the now dead Columbia Basin area. All the other pilots were forced down on the first leg with Menefee making it to the first turn point. Pallmer, who was not entered in the Contest, declared a broken leg course to his home field for a Diamond Goal and made it! Jim Hard, in his 1-19, flew locally for a Gold C altitude gain.

Scores: Moore-1000, Robertson-559, Menefee-224, Wilson-167, McDonald-127, and Asdel-127.

According to the rules it was another no-contest day.

## Wednesday, July 5th

The morning started out with thundershowers and weak-looking clouds. Some of the pilots had difficulty in staying up. It was the sort of day that produced short periods of instability when the sun came out but when the clouds covered the sun, the lift disappeared. The task committee had to be reformed on the departure of Allemann. When the rain quit a task to Mansfield and return, 80 miles, as many times as possible was

declared. Moore was the only one to get away from the ridge. Just as he left, the cloud cover clamped in solidly and finished soaring for the day. Moore struggled all the way to Mansfield but could not penetrate back to the field and landed at Douglas. Again a no-contest day.

## Thursday, July 6th

By this time the morale was at an all-time low. Confidence in the weather forecasts had virtually disappeared, so the news that it would be a reasonable day with SE winds aloft was greeted with bored skepticism. A task to Chief Joseph Dam and return, 100 miles, looked like another impossible sort of job and it was to all except Moore. He was the only one to get away from the field for a flight of about 80 miles to the Dam and back to Waterville. The rest of the pilots flew locally in a weak wave development that topped out at 8000 feet.

Another no-contest day.

## Friday, July 7th

The skies were clear but the lapse rate promised little, if any, soaring. By this time the task committee was reduced to a state of bland insouciance which resulted in a declaration of, at last, a formal no-contest day. The reason being that plans for the Friday night banquet ruled out the only possible solution, free distance. Frank Woodward seized the chance, declared that he was not hungry anyway, and proceeded to make a goal flight of 190 miles downwind to Kellogg, Idaho, for his Gold C distance and Diamond goal.

Final scores for the contest, in spite of five no-contest days out of five, were as follows: Moore-3940, Menefee-1224, Robertson-662, Wilson-367 McDonald-338, and Asdel-289.

The weather, of course, improved after the competition ended, to the point where Robertson made a 200-mile goal and return on Saturday, with Wilson in the venerable Weihe making the same course in 1½ hours less.

All in all, it was a lot of fun, but one lesson was learned; the rules for a big Nationals type contest cannot be applied to a small local contest without considerable modification.

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