

1st ANNUAL EASTERN OPEN SOARING CHAMPIONSHIP

Sanctioned by The Soaring Society of America, Inc.

by JIM GRAY, Contest Manager

The First Annual Eastern Open Soaring Championship was a contest designed from the outset to be unpronounceable! It did, however, manage to simulate, to a small degree, a National Championship. The organization, rules, facilities, etc., were intended to lend the "feel" of a National and provide a variety of tasks requiring sustained pilot effort. We didn't want anyone to feel that he had not *earned* his points. As indicated by the SSA sanction and cash awards, the meet was also to be a training ground for the Nationals in Wichita. Traditionally, the scope of the July meet on Harris Hill has been the Northeastern United States. This year, to attract more pilots, the meet was planned for the Eastern U.S. Competing pilots were required to have at least Silver C distance. The Saturday preceding and the Sunday following the contest were planned as "Soaring Camp" days to encourage Silver C qualifications for those who might not have them.

Sat., July 1st—Camp

A day to get ready. Amid visitors, sailplanes, trailers, Civil Air Patrol arrival, and the normal confusion and hubbub, the EASC managed to set up the pop stand tent, which previously, due to inadequate tie-down, had logged more soaring than our 2-22. Miss Katy Jones arrived with office equipment and soon had

things organized with the help of Bob Owens and the EASC auxiliary. Barney Wiggin took over the "weather room" as usual and soon had his new teleprinters (two of them!) pounding out 90 w.p.m. copy. True McLean flew his neat Luscombe 8F down to assist with barographs. An evening hangar flying session at the Hilltop Inn lasted until 3 A.M. Oh yes, Ed Thomas and his communications bus were firmly entrenched by nightfall.

July 2nd—1st Contest Day

Opening ceremonies were held near the hangar at 11:00 A.M. The Reverend Martin Hardin asked the invocation and Mayor Edward A. Mooers of Elmira welcomed pilots and visitors to Harris Hill. Paul Schweizer, representing SSA, said a few words as did Alex Dawydoff, who represented *Flying* magazine. Bill Frutchy extended the greetings of EASC.

Pilots' meeting had previously been held at 9:30 A.M., and Barney (midst 20 pounds of yellow weather copy) elocuted on the weather. Winds from 260° up to 18 knots were expected with late afternoon thundershowers a possibility. The Task Committee, Hal Bovenkerk, Joe Perrucci, W. Frutchy, J. Gray and B. Wiggin, selected a 76-mile goal race to Sidney, New York. A rather

gusty crosswind on the field, coupled with fewer towplanes than expected, created some delays in launching. Bud Briggs rode a beautiful storm front into Sidney with smooth 1200-ft./min. lift much of the way. This was too much for Bernie Carris, so he made a late take-off ahead of a similar line squall and also made it to Sidney Airport.

In the evening at the "Ad" Building, Barney Wiggin entertained us all with a colored slide show and commentary on the World Championships at Camphill, St. Yan and Cologne as seen through a team captain's eyes.

July 3rd—2nd Contest Day

Wind 260°, 10/15 knots. Cloud build-ups to 10,000' MSL, bases at 5/6000'. Task Committee selected a 112-mile triangle with turns at Ithaca and Tri-Cities. Paul Schweizer and Bob Smith flew nearly to Elmira on the last leg but were forced down at Southport by a wall of advancing rain. Bernie and the RJ-5 made it back to Waverly. Other pilots made the 1st turn and landed there or along the second leg.

The Schweizer lawn party was held in the evening, followed by a showing of their new color film "Sky Sailing," produced by Dick Huppertz. Rene Comte's film "Whispering Wings" was also shown. A factory tour was held, and people got to see the Ag-Cats, Gulfstream subassemblies and all sorts of aeronautical goodies.

July 4th—3rd Contest Day

Pilots' meeting, 0930. Weather prescription by Wiggin: Frontal passage during the night brought with it a CPK air mass. Instability to over 10,000 ft. MSL predicted. A Bermuda high kept moist air circulating northward giving typical afternoon monsoons. Wind 30 knots from 300°. Task selected was free distance. However, as Barney warned *might* happen, cloud cover became 10/10 for awhile. Many were called but few were chosen, because conditions broke late in mid-afternoon. Ted Falk in his 1-26, Bernie in the RJ-5 and Howie Trampenau in the newly recovered bunny nose L-K, succeeded in going more than 20 miles to make a contest day. Ted got the 1,000 points.

Fireworks at Eldridge Park that night capped the holiday weekend.

July 5th—4th Contest Day

Early morning valley temperatures set a record low of 44°F. for



Bernie Carris before the RJ-5 sailplane, which he used to win the First Eastern Open Soaring Championship.

Photo by
Rose Marie Licher