

PREPARATIONS FOR WORLD GLIDING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by PAUL A. SCHWEIZER, *Team Captain*

At the midwinter meeting of the SSA Board of Directors in January, a resolution to enter a team in the 9th World Gliding Championships, to be held in Argentina in February, 1963, was unanimously approved. This was the first time that there had been unanimous agreement on sending a team to the Internationals, and it would seem that this represents a significant step ahead for soaring in the U.S.A.

Most soaring enthusiasts have felt that competing in the International is similar to competing in the Olympics—it is expected of us. The official rules of the Championships give the purpose as, "... to stimulate the development of gliding by an international comparison of performance and to reinforce friendship amongst glider pilots of all nations." The Internationals provide a gauge for our pilots and sailplanes under different conditions, encourage exchange of ideas between countries and contribute, to some degree, toward better international understanding.

This will be the seventh time that American pilots have competed in a World Championship Contest and the sixth time that we have entered an official team. Some might wonder why they are referred to as the World "Gliding" Championships instead of World "Soaring" Championships. In England they do not seem to worry about this distinction; therefore, lacking any move to change it, this term continues to be used.

The unsettled political condition in Argentina has been the basis for some concern about whether or not the meet was to be held. However, the Federacion Argentina de Vuelo a Vela (FAVAV) has assurances that the meet will go on and, from other sources of information, it seems quite definite that the 1963 International will be held as planned.

From the preliminary returns, it appears that there will be a record number of participants at the International. As a result, the entries are limited to three pilots per country, either two open and one stand-

ard class, or two standard and one open class. Our pilots were seeded shortly after the National, using the seeding system which has worked out so well for the past three teams. The top ten pilots of the two previous Nationals, plus the previous International team pilots, rate each other in a special ballot. The results this year were Dick Johnson, first; Dick Schreder, second; and John Ryan, third. Dick Johnson has chosen to fly his Adastra and Dick Schreder his HP-11, both open class sailplanes. Consequently, John Ryan will fly in the standard class and has arranged to fly the new Prue Super Standard sailplane.



Photo by George Uveges

Dick Johnson, first pilot on the 1963 U.S. soaring team, world soaring distance record holder (535 miles) and five-time U.S. National Soaring Champion.

Selection of the balance of the team is done with the Captain working with the pilots and the SSA Contest Board. Pilots have a great deal to do with the choice of their crew and normally they choose those people with whom they have worked at Nationals and other competitions. The other team positions, such as meteorologist, translator and radio technician, do require specialized training and experience. In general, the attempt is made to take

soaring pilots, particularly any seeded pilots, who may be interested in going as crew. The complete team is as follows:

1st Pilot	Richard H. Johnson
Crew Chief	Alice Johnson
2nd Crew	Rodney D. Smith
3rd Crew	Robert Klemmedson

2nd Pilot	Richard E. Schreder
Crew Chief	Irving Prue
2nd Crew	Angie Schreder
3rd Crew	William Coverdale

3rd Pilot	John D. Ryan
Crew Chief	L. Gale Abels
2nd Crew	Jerry D. Robertson
3rd Crew	Charles R. Doty

Team Captain	Paul A. Schweizer
Team Manager	Hugh Whitney
Team Meteorologist	Harold Klieforth
Team Interpreter	Philip Paul

Information on soaring conditions in Argentina is being obtained from various sources, and it appears that they might be compared to "good midwest soaring conditions." There appear to be considerable marshy areas, for which the pilots will have to watch out because of the tendency for conditions to be more stable in these areas. The week-long practice period will provide a good opportunity for the pilots to get used to the Argentine conditions.

Organization work for the team is progressing with members carrying out various assignments. A great deal of work has to be done in lining up equipment, radio gear, uniforms, etc., in addition to getting the ships and trailers ready. Other items that have to be taken care of are getting passports, visas, shots, carnets, maps, etc., plus working out all the transportation and logistic problems.

In order to make it possible to send a team, it is necessary that funds be available. As in the past, no regular SSA funds are to be used for the soaring team; all funds coming from a special fund drive that is being conducted. All team members realize that they may have to share their costs according to a priority system used for previous teams.

One phase of the fund drive is an appeal to the aviation industry, and this is under way at the present time. Unfortunately, so far, the returns have been rather small. We look to the SSA members and clubs