

Going for Distance

In the March *Soaring*, Dick Schreder introduced some of the comments he had solicited from numerous well-known soaring pilots on how best to break the world soaring distance record of 535.169 miles (861.272 km.) set by Dick Johnson in the RJ-5 sailplane on August 5, 1951. Anyone having thoughts on this subject is invited to send them to Dick Schreder at 1150 Nebraska Ave., Toledo 7, Ohio. Each month, the comments of a few more pilots will be published, as space permits. Some follow.

Pete Bowers' Comments

Careful study of the weather, combined with the known meteorological advantages offered by certain portions of the country MAY eventually result in a new distance record. However, I don't think that it will be done this way. The record has stood too long in the face of capable machines, improved weather forecasting and an increasing number of proven "good" soaring areas.

OPPORTUNISM, combined with a condition of almost continual "Ready Alert," is the most apt to do it. How often have the predicted booming soaring conditions fallen short when the start was made an hour too late because of difficulties in getting the ship out to the field and set up? Speaking from my own experience and that of many other pilots that I know, opportunism, the ability to take advantage of the proper conditions when they are presented to you, is the key to success. I have thrown away certain Gold distance on at least three different occasions by being unable to take advantage of superior weather conditions because of a previous commitment that made it imperative that I keep the flight short and get back to the gliderport at a certain time instead of landing 200 miles away and then calling in to apologize for the broken date.

Most would-be record holders are rather rigidly confined in a straight-jacket of available time. Their flight has to be made on a weekend, or during scheduled vacation time. The big break in the weather doesn't consider these problems. How many sailplane gliders have seen that unexpected super soaring condition

start to develop at 7:30 A.M. on their way to work, and still be good and lively when they drive home again at 5:00 P.M.? The true opportunist who is ready to break a record will be the one who can drive right past the office and on out to the gliderport, stopping only long enough at a phone to persuade the tow pilot to come out and tow him off in his ship, anything from a 1-23D on up, which is READY TO GO. The two-to-four-hour advantage gained under these circumstances can easily add 200 miles to any flight that starts at the more traditional hours of 10:00 or 12:00. Ten kilometers (6.214 mi.) is all that is needed to establish the new record.

So the record-seeker starts off for the 600-mile distance without a retrieve set up, and not much chance of getting one since it's the middle of the week and his usual volunteer crew doesn't have his degree of dedication to the setting of a new record. The consequences are part of the cost of playing for such high stakes. If the meteorological conditions, which are the most essential item in setting the record, come only in the middle of the week, the pilot is going to have to be ready to take advantage of them. The odds are 261 to 104, over 2½ to 1, against the superior conditions coming on a Saturday or Sunday. The OPPORTUNIST will grab the conditions when they are right, and not wait for them to suit his convenience.

\$200 PHOTO CONTEST

As for 1961, \$200 has been contributed to SSA for the purpose of conducting another contest for photos of sailplanes in flight. The new contest will run until October 1, 1962. Prize money will be awarded as follows: \$100, \$50, \$25 and five awards of \$5 each. Any person may enter in the contest any photo of a sailplane in flight not previously submitted or used in *Soaring* magazine or a soaring calendar. If the entrant did not take the photograph, he must submit a release from the photographer. All entries must be 8" x 10" black and white glossy prints marked "contest" and become the property of SSA. None will be returned.

Entries will be judged by four members of the SSA Publications Committee. Weight in judging will be given to sailplanes currently flying in order to promote modern, up-to-date soaring. Send photos to SSA, Box 66071, Los Angeles 66, Calif.



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