

AUSTRALIAN NATIONALS

The Australian National Soaring Competitions were held at Narromine in the western wheat country of New South Wales from Dec. 28, 1962, to Jan. 11, 1963. Merv Waghorn won the Champion's Crown by consistently scoring on 7 days, flying the Sydney Soaring Club's Skylark 2. John Blackwell, flying a Ka-6, finished second and Alan Patching, flying a Skylark 2, finished third in League One. Mal Tuit of Alice Springs won the League Two Championship, flying an Olympia-Meise.

The rules of the Nationals divided the competitors into two leagues. League One included all ships of L/D better than 25, and League Two all ships of L/D less than 25. Furthermore, all ships had a handicap factor worked out to within 1%, which proved utterly useless in League One. Under the rules, up to three pilots could fly one aircraft. Although this rule helps solve the crew problems, it introduces a lot more chance and luck into the final placings. Thus Merv Waghorn flying alone had to fly on at least seven days, whilst John Blackwell and Alan Patching only flew on three days. Although John Blackwell never scored top points and Merv Waghorn had three winning days, Merv had to win the last day to beat John by less than one point.

The weather was very unseasonal and chancy. Narromine is reputed to be teeming with 2000-fpm and better thermals to 10 or 12 thousand feet. (None of the competitors will ever believe this!) And rain around Christmas is a rarity. Yet

out of 14 days, three days were abandoned because of rain and one because the whole countryside was flooded after a 3½" downpour. Only two days brought consistent soaring weather and on most days a high overcast, Cu-Nim shadows and passing squalls made flying chancy.

Naturally, the flights in such weather were not outstanding. The longest distance was covered by Merv Waghorn on a goal flight to Narrandera (196 miles). The best speed around a 100-km. triangle was flown in a BG-12A at 39 mph. The weak weather was also reflected in the results achieved by the types of ships flown. The Skylark 2 won six of the ten contest days, the BG-12A two, and the Ka-6 and ES-59 Arrow one each.

Australian Championships do not offer the same interest as in most countries, regarding new ships on the starting line. Since the introduction of new regulations about five years ago, amateur design has been practically stamped out. Under the new regulations, no aircraft is permitted to fly without a C of A, and a C of A can only be issued to an approved type. Thus a prototype machine cannot be test flown until an ATC is obtained. This rule was enforced with absolute rigidity in the case of the BG-12A, which was grounded for over half a year before special permission could be obtained for prototype test flights, which had to be repeated, although Briegleb's report was available. Then only three pilots were permitted to fly until a provisional C of A was granted two years later. No amateur

will attempt to design and build an aircraft in these circumstances.

Strangely enough, the regulations were suggested by the Gliding Federation of Australia to help further the sport of gliding in this country.

Not only amateur-built ships are affected by the new regulations. As there are no provisions for the manufacturer to design and test new types unless he goes the "whole hog," no manufacturer can risk developing new types. The Schneider ES-59 design was scheduled to fly in 1959, but shelved because of strict enforcement of the new rules. Only with the help of a subsidy from the GFA was the prototype completed in 1962, a delay of nearly four years, enough in most cases to make a type obsolete before first test flight. Prior to this Edmund Schneider developed a most interesting series of type obsolete before first test flight.

This year the only local newcomer was the ES-59 Arrow, a 14-meter one-piece wing single-seater with L/D of 27. With swept forward wings and swept back tail it cuts a striking picture, and performs excellently. The first production model was shipped to Junín to compete in the World Championships. An imported Mucha Standard also appeared for the first time in competitions.

The home-builders were represented with two BG-12A's and a Cherokee in league one, and an Olympiad Meise and Grunau 2 in league two. The Cherokee just completed by the Renmark Club certainly deserves no less comment than "A Masterpiece."

The following types were represented at Narromine this year:

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The newcomer at the competitions, the Schneider ES-59 Arrow, at the take-off line with Curtis Delan at the controls. It features a 14-meter (46-ft.), one-piece wing and has a maximum glide ratio of 27 to 1 and minimum sink of 2.3 ft./min. One of these was entered in the 1963 World Championships. Next in line is the Renmark Club's Cherokee II, built from plans in Australia.

A Briegleb BG-12A on a winch launch during the competitions. Moulding the canopy was a problem, the best one turned out too high and wide and had to be used. The only deviations from the standard BG-12A are a disc brake on the wheel, pitot head on the fin and push-pull operated flaps. The ship was grounded for six months after completion in January, 1960; it has since logged over 450 hours.

