

THE 15th CANADIAN NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS

by DOUG McCORMICK, MSC Public Relations Director

The 15th Canadian National Soaring Championships was officially opened on July 14th at Hawkesbury, Ontario, by the Director of Civil Aviation, Mr. R. W. Goodwin of the Dept. of Transport, and Group Captain R. W. McNair, Senior Airstaff Officer of Air Defence Headquarters, St-Hubert, Que. Duration of the contest was from Tuesday, July 16th, to Thursday, July 25th. Dave Webb of the Montreal Soaring Council was declared the 1963 National Soaring Champion with a score of 3524 points. He flew a Skylark 4 sailplane.

This contest, hosted by the Montreal Soaring Council and directed by Terry Beasley, president of the Soaring Association of Canada, had an international flavoring with Dick Schreder of Brian, Ohio, a top U. S. competitor; Donald A. (Doc) Mosher of the Illini Glider Club, Champaign, Illinois; Joe Peruci of the Tri-Cities Soaring Society, Endicott, N.Y.; and Adam Witek of the Kielce Aero Club, Poland, taking part. The 15th Nationals came close to going down in the records as "No Contest" because of very poor soaring conditions. The Task Committee of Terry Beasley, Julien Audette and Gordy Hicks set realistic tasks for the predicted conditions, but fickle nature did not deliver.

The first contest day, Wednesday July 17th, was a 125-mile triangular course race with turn points

at Cornwall and Cumberland. The task was a little too ambitious in that only Dave Webb completed the triangle, thereby making it a distance day for scoring. The team of G. Lockhard/D. Parsey of the Gatineau Club was 2nd and Adam Witek was 3rd. Doc Mosher did manage to get his Gold badge altitude leg with 14,500 ft. asl.

Thursday the 18th a distance task was set for Pendleton, the home of the Gatineau Club, some 25 miles from Hawkesbury, and return, then free distance from there on. This day was declared no contest since no pilot exceeded the 35-mile minimum distance for scoring.

The poor soaring conditions were due to the proximity of a warm front that moved through the area that night bringing an unstable air mass in on Friday with good convection predicted by the met man and 15-mph westerly winds. With this information the task committee declared a free distance day. Off went twenty-one sailplanes winging freely for distance. Adam Witek chalked up 196 miles for 1st place in his Foka 4, Martin Jurgeit of SOSA in a Ka-6CR took 2nd place with 148 miles, Dick Schreder was 3rd in the HP-11 with 147.5 miles and Dave Webb went 147 miles in his Skylark 4 to place 4th. Since Adam exceeded 300 kilometers, the following day was declared a rest day as per the rules, which gave the visitors an opportunity to visit Montreal and Ot-

tawa, both 60 miles from Hawkesbury.

The publicity of the Nationals on radio, TV and newspapers through the Canadian Press brought many spectators who witnessed the efficient launching of 21 sailplanes by Oscar Estebany and his crew of tow pilots in four Super Cubs and the Club's old Tiger Moth along with his sharp ground crew handling ropes wings and signals. They were also treated to the sight of 14 sailplanes thermalling over the field in weak lift for almost a couple of hours on Sunday, July 21st. Late that afternoon a sudden squall moved in from the north and cut off the competitors who had left on a 100-kilometer triangle with turn points at Plantagenet and Alexandria. Adam Witek, Dick Schreder, Dave Webb and Charlie Yeates attempted to fly through, but the down drafts behind the squall plunked them right down from one to seven miles from home. Once more, since no one completed the speed task, it was scored as distance along a set course.

On Monday the 22nd, thermal conditions were weaker than expected with large storms over the Laurentian and Adirondack Mountains, leaving a large mass of stable air over the St. Lawrence river to the south. These conditions forced most aircraft down just before reaching Alexandria, the second turn point of a speed task that first took them to Plantagenet. Dave Webb completed the task alone, with Adam Witek, the next closest, landing on the third leg. The day was declared "no contest" since none of the others exceeded the required 35 miles. (The same fate awaited Dick Schreder on the last day of the contest, Thursday July 25th, when he came zooming in on a 110-mph beatup from a short 50-kilometer triangle between Hawkesbury, St. Eugene and Glen Robertson, only to find that he was the only one to make it. Had some one else come in, he would have secured 1st place on the contest.)

Tuesday the 23rd was the all important day which finally decided the Championships because the 24th and 25th were washed out. The day started off with a build-up of good Cu's to the north, as was predicted by the Met. man, and the task committee assigned a race to Joliette, Que., 63.5 miles from

The Standard Austria sailplane flown by Charlie Yeates in the Canadian Nationals, being flown in this photo at the U.S. Nationals by partner Jack Ames. This model is gaining a reputation in Europe as "the poor man's Sisu."

Photo by Alex Aldott

