

THE 16th CANADIAN NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIP

by JOHN A. KELLEY, Contest Mgr.

The 16th. Canadian National Soaring Championships, sponsored by the Southern Ontario Soaring Association, were held at the Brantford Municipal Airport from July 21st thru 30th. The contest, won by Dave Webb of Montreal, flying a Skylark 4, was successful from a competition point of view, but was marred by the tragic death of Francis Popp, president of Sail Flights Inc., of Wurtsboro, N.Y.; and by the injury, fortunately not serious, of Jack Ames of Toronto.

The contest started out to be a repetition of last year's meet at Hawkesbury, with hot humid weather. However conditions gradually improved, and six contest days were recorded; four of them being scored as speed tasks. The entry list, which reached a high point of 26 ships midway thru the contest, included eight from the United States. Among these was Dick Schreder of Bryan, Ohio, flying his new HP-11A, fresh from the U.S. Nationals at McCook, Nebraska.

July 21st.

The weather forecast indicated that with Southern Ontario being in the grip of a Maritime Tropical air mass from the Gulf of Mexico, soaring conditions would be poor. Thermals were expected to start late and not go above 3,500 feet MSL. Consequently, with the winds being light, a 65 mile triangle was chosen as the task. Turn points were at Breslau Airport and Eastwood.

Eight pilots completed the course, led by Roy Gray of Brantford with a speed of 32.8 mph. He was followed by Johann Kuhn of Detroit, Peter Mortensen of Montreal, and Dave Webb, also of Montreal. Charlie Yeates, flying his new Austria SH was fifth.

July 22nd

A cold front North of Brantford, lying along an East-West line and moving slowly Southward seemed to indicate that an out and return flight to the Southwest would be feasible. The task chosen was an 82 mile trip to London Airport and back. Unfortunately, severe thunderstorm activity ahead of the front forced suspension of launching be-

fore all the contestants had been given a chance to take off. Of the 17 ships launched, eight returned to the field and were promptly secured by many willing hands and rushed to the hangar without incident. Of the other nine, eight landed up to 30 miles out, and one pilot, Dick Schreder, managed to get around the storms and back on course. Although advised by radio that it was a no contest day he elected to continue the task for fun, and succeeded in rounding the turning point and returned to Brantford after a four hour flight.

July 23rd

Better soaring conditions in the somewhat cooler and drier air behind the front led the task committee to select a somewhat more ambitious task with the emphasis on distance rather than speed. A 112 mile triangular course to the North was selected. The third leg was extended along a line through Welland Airport. This third leg passed over Brantford Airport, which was not considered as a turn point. The other two points to be rounded were Elmira and St. Mary's.

After a couple of ships had gone down on the first leg the telephones were silent for a long time, indicating good conditions along the second leg. Finally reports came in via radio that some pilots were on the third leg, and soon one or two specks began to appear in the sky to the West. Three sailplanes passed over the field, and three others just scraped in to land at the airport. Those that had passed over did not get very far, two of them, Yeates and Mortensen landing in the same field on the outskirts of Brantford. Webb got a little further, but as he was off course his task distance ended up at 116 miles, the same as the other two, and all three got 1,000 points. Kuhn, Schreder, and Ed Seymour of Rochester each had 958 points for their 112 mile flights ending at the airport.

This put Mortensen in the lead, closely followed by Webb; Kuhn and Yeates were now tied for third place, and Roy Gray was a few points behind, lying 5th. Less than



The 1964 Canadian National Champion, Dave Webb, right, is presented with the Shell Oil Trophy by S.O.S.A. President, Norm Jull.

60 points separated these five.

July 24th

With a return to hot humid air the tephigram showed no promise of any soaring above about 1,000 feet. A no contest day was declared therefore. Local flying later proved the forecast to be correct.

July 25th

With the weather showing some improvement over the previous day a short out and return was chosen. This time it was a 72 mile flight to Stratford and back. The forecast did not turn out to be too accurate, and the overcast which should have burned off at 11:00 AM was still much in evidence at the announced take-off time of 12:30. Take offs were postponed for one hour, with all pilots holding their original take-off order. A check flight, and some telephoning led the contest manager to believe that conditions would improve; so at 1:30 take offs commenced despite poor visibility and cloud base of 2,300 feet above terrain. However it was definitely soarable, and most ships got away. A few returned to the airport, either not liking the marginally VFR conditions or find-