

1966 NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPIONSHIPS — THE TOP TEN

FINAL STANDING— PILOT	CONTEST MILEAGE	HIGHEST ALTITUDE	BEST TASK SPEED	LONGEST TASK FLIGHT	TOTAL FLYING HOURS	CREW CAR MILEAGE
1. Schreder, R. E.	2511.0	16,000	62.7	440.5	64:18	4,000
2. Moffat, G.	2504.0	18,000	71.1	439.0	64:00	4,000
3. Thomson, G.	2452.0	24,000	61.1	443.0	66:45	4,000
4. Ryan, J.	2223.5	24,000	66.4	418.5	58:24	3,390
5. Makula, E.	2400.5	23,000	59.3	431.5	64:00	5,600
6. Klein, C.	2249.0	24,000	59.8	421.0	48:42	4,525
7. Klemmedson, R.	2375.5	24,000	61.3	413.5	60:00	3,600
8. Svec, D.	2393.5	17,500	54.1	435.0	—	3,000
9. Brittingham, J.	2312.5	24,000	57.0	437.0	58:55	2,700
10. Starr, S.	2276.0	24,000	60.6	406.0	57:30	4,400
TOTALS	23,699.0			4,284.5		

THE FINAL DAY

The final task of the historic 33rd National Soaring Championships, as tasks at the historic 33rd National Soaring Championships went, was a modest one, a 174.5-mile triangle with turnpoints at Susanville and Ravendale, California. The thermals would be modest too, going only to 16,000 feet or so. There would be strong winds, and waves as a consequence.

If you were Dick Schreder, with 7385 points, or George Moffat with 7223, it was a good day to be nervous. It wasn't even a bad day to be nervous if you were Graham Thomson with 7026 points. Further down the list, where Ryan, Makula, Klemmedson and Klein dwelled (with 6613, 6608, 6577 and 6479 points respectively) it wasn't completely out of fashion to be nervous.

For A. J. Smith, whose disastrous flight of the day before had tumbled him to 14th place, it hardly seemed worthwhile getting nervous. And not being nervous can make a difference. A little over three hours after take off A. J. walked into the main hangar at Stead and planted his feet in a small patch of sunlight on the floor. He was shivering, but exultant.

"You can see the turnpoint panels from 24,000 feet. It's wild! I used wave lift all the way except for the first thermal. There were gangs of guys up there at 24,000 feet with iced-up canopies, peering out. It was easy."

As Walt Mooney entered the scoring room, he said "I want to report that I made it today!" When congratulated he responded, "Was there any doubt?" He and the 1-26 made it around the course without getting into any of the wave, at a speed of 27.00 mph. Finishing was especially nice for his wife Carole and crew chief Ron Stoner. They had rigged the 1-26 15 times during the meet. Although finishing meant another de-rigging to go home the next day no one was complaining.

The greatest interest was focused on Schreder, who now lead Moffat by 162 points. This morning—once again—Dick was having trouble, and Moffat was well out on course ahead of him. It was 1345 before everything was in order and the HP-14 towed off for its final flight of the contest. In the next two hours the issue would be decided.

EPILOGUE — RICHARD SCHREDER'S SECRET

Richard Schreder sat half listening to the speeches and jokes at the SSA banquet that followed the Championships. He knew he would be called upon to say something as winner of the meet. But what?

Thomson had see-saved and finally landed third place. It had been hard to dislodge Moffat from first place. His name had been at the top for six straight days. Then on the seventh day Thomson had won and in the shuffle Schreder had toppled Moffat to second. With two days remaining he had gotten his stride and won both tasks.

The last day was a bit of a cliff-hanger, though. Moffat was dogging him in second with only a few points separating them. Schreder had steamed through the starting gate at 120 knots when he ran mid-air into a brick wall. There was a loud report and the roar of wind filled the cockpit. The guest had registered 4 g's negative. He twisted around and saw a gaping hole in the rear canopy. An unsecured duffel bag had slammed against the top and broken the plexiglass. For some time he proceeded on course fearing to land lest he relinquish his lead to Moffat, but finally returned and made lash-up repairs with cardboard and masking tape. It seemed the delay would cost him the meet, especially when Moffat came whistling back with the early arrivals. In-

stead of landing with the others, Moffat circled in the area weighing the advisability of a second round should Schreder appear to have made good time.

As a matter of fact, the late start had proved a blessing because stronger conditions had developed later, assisting him in achieving a winning 54-mph speed.

His musings were broken by the voice of the M.C. asking him to come forward and accept the winner's trophy. When the applause died down the microphone was pushed before him. He knew what he would say.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "I knew from the very beginning I was going to win." There was a startled silence in the audience.

"For that reason I was very relaxed and confident throughout the meet. There was no doubt, at any time of the final outcome. The reason is that the night before the contest we dined at the Chinese Pagoda and I knew my fate was decided with I opened my fortune cookie."

He removed his billfold from his pocket and extracted the small slip of paper. He read,

"It says, 'You will soon receive an important award or prize.'"

Darn clever, those Chinese.