

The Technical University at Brno, Czechoslovakia, has recently completed a new high-performance prototype, the VSB-62, Vega, shown here in flight. Basic construction is of polystyrene-reinforced wood, a technique that has also gained favor with the Akaflieg Darmstadt in light of its relative cheapness. The 18.5-meter wing of the Vega is tapered and is fitted with flaps which reflex for high-speed cruising. The landing gear is a modification of that used on the Blanik, permitting complete retraction of the wheel. The ship also features an 80-liter water-ballast tank near the center of gravity, and a tail chute to supplement the standard air brakes. The full-blown canopy is hinged at the front and the instruments, in keeping with modern practice, are mounted in a console resembling that of the Foka. Wing area is 174 sq.ft., aspect ratio 21.14, and maximum wing loading 6.6 lbs./sq.ft. The glide ratio is given as one to 42 at 95 km./hr. and the minimum sink as 0.536 m/sec. at 77 km./hr.

WEST GERMANY

In view of the fact that the Twentieth Olympiad will take place in Munich, Bavaria, in 1972, the possibility of including soaring as one of the events is being discussed. Inquiries on the matter have been directed to the Olympic Committee by the West German Aeroclub.

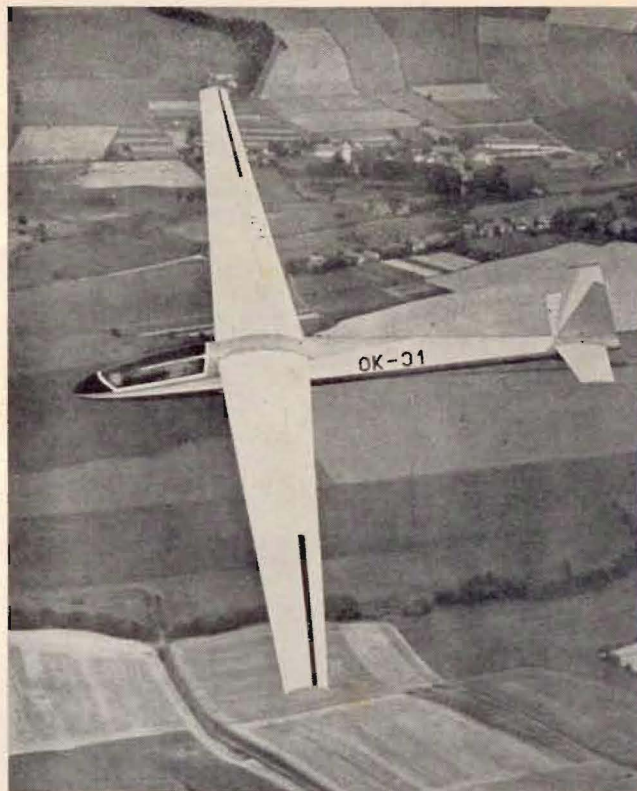
Sporting aviation has never been included in the Olympic Games, although there were gliding demonstrations given at the London Games in 1908, at Antwerp in 1920 and at Berlin in 1936. Prior to the 1940 Games there were extended negotiations and an international sailplane design competition — won by the Meise Olympia — to determine the necessary monotype. A contest site had been chosen about 60 miles from Munich, but the outbreak of World War Two intervened. The matter of a gliding competition in conjunction with the Olympics has never been seriously considered since.

There would not seem to be any serious problem, from an official point of view, in getting consideration from the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) for the inclusion of gliding in the 1972 event. The FAI, which governs world gliding, is among those organizations recognized by the I.O.C., although it has never been listed on the program of the Games. The creation or selection of a suitable monotype would undoubtedly pose the greatest problem, for such a competition would dictate that all pilots should have the same equipment. This goal has been approached by the spirit of the Standard Class, but has not thus far been realized at any World Gliding Championships. A great deal of work would unquestionably be necessary in order to make a soaring championships a part of the 20th Olympiad, but the results would certainly seem worth the effort.

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SWITZERLAND

The Technical Section of the soaring group at the University of Zurich has launched, via a questionnaire, an investigation as to just what constitutes the ideal glider — personal opinions requested. Behind this is the thought that the new super-sailplanes, with their limited production runs and high prices, are getting away from the needs of the everyday pilot. What we seem to need is a machine with the robustness and ease of transport of the 1-26, the performance of a K-6 . . . and the price of a Volkswagen



FRANCE

There may be some argument as to whether the Fournier *avion planeur* (airplane glider) is more nearly a powered glider or an ultra-light powered airplane. Suffice it to say, whichever category the ship falls into, that this imaginative and attractive little airplane is rapidly making a name for itself and will soon be seen about the world in increasing numbers. The RF-3 has undergone several years of developmental work and 95 of them were manufactured by the Alpavia firm at Gap, in Southern France, before production ceased some months ago. Now an improved version, the RF-4, is to be built by a Franco-German cooperative which has been established at Dahlem-Eifel, in Germany, where local authorities are providing subsidy for a new factory.

The new firm, Sportavia, plans to employ some 70 workers and to produce up to ten aircraft a month. Production will be exclusively of the RF-4, an 11-meter, single-seat aircraft, until the introduction of the RF-5, a two-place version. This is to be powered by a 60 h.p. Volkswagen engine and is scheduled to fly in April. Deliveries to customers are to begin in 1968.

The performance of the RF-3 is quite noteworthy. With the 39 h.p. of its Rectimo AR1200 VW engine it can cruise at around 110 m.p.h. At cruising r.p.m. (3200) the engine consumes less than three gallons of fuel per hour. The gliding performance is given as 18:1 at 60 m.p.h., a figure at which it is still possible to have a great deal of fun under the proper conditions. Readers are warned not to get too excited about the Fournier aircraft, however. European commitments seem likely to absorb the potential production of the new factory for many months to come.