

USA RADIO CONTROL

Soaring

Jim Simpson

Planning for this event began in November 1974 with a personal visit by John Worth to the National Soaring Society (NSS) Board meeting in Washington, D.C. There he requested support from the NSS for this event, and accordingly NSS President Rod Smith sent me to Lake Charles, La. in January 1975 to help in the search for a site. After almost 8 hours of fruitless site search we found the DeQuincy Municipal Airport and negotiated its use with Mayor Buddy Henagan and airport operator Gene Allen. I was then invited to the Nats Planning Committee meeting in an advisory capacity where I estimated the requirements in terms of equipment and personnel for a suitable RC Soaring event. These requirements were included in the NATS budget which was later approved by the AMA executive committee and a team of soaring enthusiasts was assembled to convert a dream into reality!

As the summer rolled on we spent countless hours in the process of coordinating, procurement and training for this event in an effort to make it as good as we possibly could. This effort included a practice contest designed to test the newly acquired equipment and train the working team. This contest was sponsored by the famous



Legion Aire designer Cecil Haga shows son Bill how it's done, as his model begins its ascent after a neat launch. Contestants numbered 70, 35 Unlimited, 30 Standard, five in Scale. Bottom: Joe Rimmer shows launch style which earned him first place in Standard class.

Ft. Worth Thunderbirds and staffed with those chosen to do the job. Finally, the planning phase ended after carefully detailed coordination with the SOAR Club of Chicago and adoption of their technique and procedures which they so carefully developed over the previous six years with their annual RC Soaring Nationals.

The execution phase of this event began with the movement of the equipment and personnel from the Ft. Worth/Dallas metroplex to the event headquarters at the Rodeway Inn in Sulphur, La. This task required seven vehicles and all day Sunday August 3rd to accomplish. A quick check of the site revealed that the effect of recent rains would require the patience of Job to cope with; but knowing the perseverance of Soaring folks we cheerfully began processing in room 109 all day Monday and praying for better weather throughout the night. As it turned out we were off by one day as rain effects hampered our initial setup and restricted the first day's flying to only two complete rounds. An interesting incident occurred as round two was drawing to a close which directly reflects why RC Soaring is the fastest growing segment of model aviation. With only two flights needed to finish round two the decision was made to launch them in spite of a rapidly approaching thundershower. Naturally, everyone anticipated that the pilots would select the 2-minute instead of the 10-minute option as it had already begun to sprinkle. But no, as true RC Soaring pilots they both recognized that the lift was there and flew on and on as the sky opened and everyone sought shelter under the tents. For the 10 minutes (which surely seemed to be 10 hours to the drenched pilots) shouts of encouragement were heard up and down

the line. Finally with perfect and near perfect scores, Ernie Harwood of Tex. and Arthur Sark of Fla. landed amid loud cheering and standing ovation! Thus the stage was set for the following two days of near perfect soaring weather, which lessened the inconvenience of muddy underfooting.

The vital statistics for this contest are as follows: The total entry was 70 contestants divided into 35 Unlimited class, 30 in the Standard class and 5 in Scale. Of these entries, 50 flew to completion. There were actually 495 launches accomplished in 13½ hours of actual contest operation which averages one launch every 1.6 minutes! For such accomplishments the contestants and myself wish to express our thanks to my wife, Karen and son Alan; to Helmer and Jane Johnson and their son Van; to Bill and Juanita Slater; to Carrol Moffatt and Peggy Orozco and finally to Tom Blakenev and Tex Schmidt. These people sacrificed vacations and a chance to compete in order to do the work which resulted in this being a successful meet. Our gratitude is also extended to Jim Martin, Nick Nixon and John Embry of the LARKS Club because without their effort and support this event simply wouldn't have been.

Presentation of awards was the primary purpose of the banquet held at the Rodeway Inn on Thursday night following the finish of competition. There were 73 people in attendance including John Worth, Johnny Clemens and Mayor Buddy Henagan. The food and drink were outstanding and the mood of all was extremely friendly. Trophy awards were made, with Texans winning 11, followed by Florida with three and Miss. and La. with one each. Results appear in the Competition News section.

