

The Frequent Flyer

The Monthly Newsletter of Caesar Creek Soaring Club

July 2007

SPECIAL EDITION

...And they said it couldn't be done !



2007 US Sports Class National Championship **Caesar Creek Gliderport, Waynesville OH**

The Sport's Class Nationals were the highlight of the year. Beautiful soaring weather, lots of great supporters, and a fleet of top notch pilots took the event to new heights. Though there were some doubting thomases that CCSC could pull it off, our own contest manager, Dick Holzwarth, led the way with a never-say-die attitude and the event turned out to be spectacular. In this special July newsletter, we are featuring the notes that Dick took each day during the contest. For those who couldn't be there in person, the following excerpt will take you through the thrill and excitement that a soaring contest can bring.

By Dick Holzwarth - Retired Contest Manager :)

June 10 - Practice Day 1

The 2007 US Sports Class National Championship is underway at Caesar Creek.

The morning of Sunday 10 June was bright and clear, with a cool and dry feeling to the air. Approximately 30 pilots reported to the CCSC clubhouse patio for a briefing, and weatherman Ray Galloway's synopsis was "High over Ohio". Ray predicted blue thermals to about 5500 msl and a reasonable soaring day, with one note of caution. High level clouds were predicted after 1500. After some consultation with his advisors, CD Andy McQuigg called a 3:00 TAT, Caesar Creek to Connersville, IN (15 mile radius) back to a new turnpoint near Jeffersonville OH named "Outlet Mall" (5 mile radius) and return to Caesar Creek. Nominal task distance of 160.12 miles. (min 120.53, max 199.77)

Sniffer Ray Galloway (P1) was launched shortly before 1300 and rapidly confirmed weatherman Ray Galloway's predictions, and so the fleet was launched.

The predicted high cover did move in a little before 1500, we figure Ray was off by about 7 minutes, and the cover did shut down most thermal activity over much of the task area.

Nevertheless, two pilots did complete the task with minimal entry into the turn areas. Congratulations to day winner Joe Jackson and runner up Frank Paynter. Jim Price finished third, with Ryszard Krolkowski in fourth leading the non-CCSC fliers. Two contestants landed out at local airports with no ill effects.

Contestants are still arriving, we're looking forward to a great contest.

June 11 - Practice Day 2

"It's kind of like Uvalde, it's just not as humid." Phil Gaisford (PG), winner of Practice Day 2, 2007 Sports Class National Championship, describing his first impression of Caesar Creek.

This is not the usual description of the soaring conditions at Caesar Creek. But....

At the morning pilot's briefing, Contest Weatherman Ray Galloway once again provided an uncomplicated assessment of the day to come. "The high is now over northern Michigan and we will have a northeast flow. More breezy than yesterday. Trigger is going to be about 79F, we will see that about 1300. The day will be mostly blue, maybe some cumulus later. But it will be good. Predicted thermal height will be about 7200 msl."

Based on the optimistic forecast, CD Andy McQuigg called a 3:00, three turnpoint TAT that covered much of the contest area. (Grimes-Fayette-Eaton-Caesar Creek)

Ray is also sniffing for us at this contest, but when the temperatures began climbing and the treetops began waving a little earlier than expected (the ground here is dry and hard) Ray the sniffer decided to launch early. (Usually a good sign.) After locating and climbing in multiple blue thermals, Ray advised Andy start the launch.

The initial going was a little slow. No relights, but the launch crew could see several fiberglass clouds in the vicinity of the gliderport. But when it popped, it really popped.

If anything, the forecast was conservative and the day may have been a slight under call. (Although it was important to have all the pilots back at CCSC for the mandatory Contest Safety Meeting. Otherwise, they might have flown until 20:00.)

All the talk on the patio reflected an outstanding soaring day. "I have never flown that far without worrying about anything." "I don't think I was below 4000 ft until final glide." Many reported strong lift to 6000, heights of 7000, and multiple thermals in excess of 6 knots. Repeatedly. And enthusiastically.

Phil Gaisford won the day with a handicapped distance of 179.19 mi and handicapped speed of 59.8 mph. Bill Thar pushed the Sparrowhawk for 195.54 miles at 58.43 mph. Dave MacKenzie scraped off the Minnesota moss and ran 173.82 miles at 57.14 mph.

Ray Galloway is sitting next to me now, working up tomorrow's forecast. He is predicting another outstanding soaring day tomorrow. Kind of like Uvalde, maybe?

June 12 – Contest Day 1

"The weather is here, wish you were beautiful..." Jimmy Buffet, minstrel and aviator.

And the weather really is here. Or isn't here, depending on your point of view. Either way, the first day of the 2007 Sports Class Nationals appears to have been an outstanding soaring day that presented numerous challenges.

Once again, the day dawned bright and clear, barely any dew. Ray Galloway gave a simple and straightforward prediction of a better soaring day than the day before, and offered a succinct technical assessment of the local conditions: "During this contest there is definitely a possibility that you may see cumulus clouds." Not much more to say.

The primary task for the day was a three hour TAT. Out to the northeast towards Beachy (almost Columbus) south to Chillicothe, west to Hook Field near Middletown, OH, and return to Caesar Creek. (202.83 mi nominal distance.)

A good indicator of the day in store was observed immediately after the morning briefing, when the two sniffers (Galloway and local pilot Don Burns) were seen directing the parade of gliders coming to the grid towards the north and south sides of the runway, in order to keep the center of the field, the takeoff zone, clear. How often do you see sniffers out in front of the grid before there is grid? That is a sure sign of a good day.

Sarah Kelly brought her CallAir towplane up from Chilhowee to assist with the launch, giving us five towplanes. (Thanks Sarah) Sarah was slightly delayed by a fog and arrived just before noon. She took a quick break while her towplane was gassed up and then was almost stuffed back into the cockpit and pointed to the grid. When are towplanes given NASCAR style pit stops? That could be a sign of a good day.

The Chilhowee towplane had just about stopped moving near its very temporary parking space when CD Andy McQuigg ordered the launch of the first sniffer. P1 quickly found usable lift, but it was well under the predicted strength during the optimum part of the day.

Andy briefly considered delaying the launch a bit to let conditions get even better, but there was a near rebellion at the back of the grid. (I KNOW I heard someone yell "Git a rope!" Pretty sure it was Giltner, but he was at the front of the grid. Oh well.) Could that be the sign of a good day?

The five towplanes and the launch crew got the fleet airborne in 65 minutes. Then we watched an awesome sky for three hours.

Based on the comments I heard from many pilots while they turned in scores, the day turned out to be much more technically demanding than it appeared from the ground. Gear shifting seemed to be the order of the day. Lots of very strong lift, but also blue holes and a shear layer that kicked the thermals sideways. Some guys claimed the clouds were so big that you couldn't tell where the lift was when you got closer to the ground. (Good. Serves them right.)

Hank Nixon won the day traveling 209.23 mi at 69.84 mph (hc 191.22 mi/63.82 mph) Sam Giltner, another great technical soarer, pushed his cunningly prepared LS-1F to second place traveling 190 mi at 60.91 mph. (hc = 193.46 mi/62.02 mph). Mike Smith brought his LS-8-18 into third with 197.99 mi at 66.03 mph. (hc=183.50 mi / 61.19 mph.)

Young Corey Sullivan (17 years old!) flying his beautiful H201 Standard Libelle came in seventh for the day. (Actual distance 169.87 mi / 56.74mph hc=173.04mi / 57.80 mph)

100 percent of the field finished. The scoresheet is posted on the patio and has been sent to SSA, the traces will be coming later. The contestants are on the patio, partying, right now. (And I want to join them.) CD Andy McQuigg and weatherman Ray Galloway are on the other side of the contest office, looking at the forecast for tomorrow, and working up potential tasks with scorer Rolf Hegele. They have just shown me Task A.

Wow...

June 13 – Contest Day 2

"There's no sensation to compare with this,
Suspended animation, a state of bliss.

Can't keep my eyes from the circling skies,
Tongue-tied and twisted, just an earthbound misfit, I."

Learning to Fly – Pink Floyd.

Of course, these guys aren't exactly learning to fly, although some may be learning to fly better. The earthbound misfit? That's me, for sure.

Ray Galloway opened the morning weather briefing with "There is a high over Michigan." Wait, we have heard this before. "Pretty much the same as yesterday, except you will probably have to go higher, and the lift will start later." (You will probably HAVE to go higher?) A few more comments about the TAF and the RAOB and the other tools he used to refine his prediction. (Window. Not MS Windows – window.) Several pilots questioned Ray regarding the potential influence the cirrus clouds we were beginning to see overhead might have on the optimistic forecast. Ray was unconcerned. "They're not there." What? We can SEE the cirrus that "is not there." A mass hallucination? "They aren't on the satellite photos, so they aren't there. Or they are very thin and will not have an effect on my forecast." (It isn't on the satellite and therefore it isn't there. Doesn't the CIA regularly get into trouble using this sort of decision logic?)

CD Andy McQuigg pressed Ray hard for an estimate of trigger time. "12:48.33"

The task called for the day was a 3:30 MAT, Highland County Airport was first turnpoint, Pickaway County the second. The pilots meeting broke up at 10:52.

I went into the contest office, worked on a couple of things, put on my orange "grid shirt", and headed down towards the grid to see how things were going.

Things were fine on the grid, but those "elusive" cumulus clouds were popping in the sky. All quadrants. 11:17. Trigger temp is when? Having learned a lesson from the near-insurrection of the day before, Andy rushed the sniffers out to the grid. Conditions just continued to build.

Except..."the cirrus that was not there" was becoming more prominent. Especially to the east, the direction of Pickaway. Cu in all quadrants, but the weakest looking cu were....yeah, you guessed it. Andy revised the task to a single turnpoint MAT, keeping Highland but dropping Pickaway.

Three sniffers today, launched approximately 12:00. Ray Galloway (P1) was joined by Rolf Hegele, our contest scorer. (Libelle H201 N11RD – "Nerd Bird") They were joined by the team of Caesar Creekers Bob Root and Pat DeNaples in SD, a CCSC ASK-21. (SD lacks an audio vario, although with both Pat and Bob sharing a cockpit, I am SURE there was some type of audible indication of where lift could be found.) P1 and Nerd Bird reported usable lift immediately, a good 45 minutes before predicted trigger. (We never heard a word from SD.) Five towplanes fired up and we commenced launching the fleet. All gliders off without incident in 62 minutes, no relights.

While the launch went on, "the cirrus that was not there" began to dominate the east to south quadrant. Looked for sure like a run to Highland was a run to the weakest part of the sky. CD McQuigg muttered something about "high tech mule" and changed the task again. Now the turnpoint was Richmond, IN, a nearly 180 degree course change. The roll call was somewhat complicated by a stuck mic in the vicinity, but it all got worked out eventually, and at 13:50 the race was on.

It is 16:25 now, the cu above CCSC are much more dispersed than they were during the launch. The ones that are there look high and stout, but they are cycling quickly, and it looks like there are some long runs between them. I have heard some early reports of 8 ½ knots sustained climb on the average, and ceilings at 75-7700 ft msl. But I also know there has already been one land out. I suspect this will turn out to be another technically challenging day.

An hour later, and the first ships are coming back. Moments after that, ALL the ships are coming back, the line crew was really challenged to clear the field and keep some landing lanes. As the gliders come back from the runway, the pilots are generally happy.

Some comment on how good the day was, but most are concerned they may not have made the best choices. The usual, unbelievable reports of 8 knot climbs and 50 mile final glides. I wouldn't believe a word of it, except I saw the sky, and their traces, so I have no choice.

Fellow Caesar Creeker Joe Jackson told me he visited several places he had never been to before, just taking advantage of the day. I get the general impression that soaring conditions were good everywhere, but in some places they were OUTSTANDING and those places kept changing. The trick was finding and getting to them, and this MAT really worked out for guys who can read the sky and determine where and when the lift will be strongest.

Sam Giltner did the best job of working out those particular variables, pushing 5U 223.46 miles at 63.38 mph (hc=227.53/64.53) Manfred Franke (HF) was close behind with 236.61 mi at 66.43 mph. (hc=226.34/63.54) George and Tim Hanke (H) brought the Duo Discus home in third with 239.87 mi at 68.10 mph.

We have several juniors flying in this contest and they are all doing well. Today, Kevin Christner (2C) put in an outstanding performance, finishing fifth in his Mosquito. (hc=226.42 mi at 63.08 mph.) Kevin was not just following the other guys around, his own assessment is that guys he was flying with were heading east into a weaker area, so he struck out on his own in a "cat's cradle" over the western part of the contest area. Well done, Kevin.

Overall, after Day 2, Sam Giltner has a 26 point lead over Hank Nixon, with Mike Smith in third, 35 points back.

A quick peek at tomorrow's weather seems to be showing...that there is a high over Michigan.

June 14 – Contest Day 3

"Dear Lord, if it is your will, on 22 June, I don't care if you send enough rain to drown Noah. But, until then, Lord, may we please have just a few more days of drought?" Nightly prayer of Dick Holzwarth, Contest Manager, 2007 Sports Class Nationals.

Who prays for droughts? Well, I won't answer that just now. (This is still farm country.) But tonight, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Opera is presenting "Faust." My wife and I have tickets, but I'm not going. I don't need the reminder.

Ray Galloway usually opens his weather briefing with a cheery "Morning." (North Carolina version.) I gave up trying to concoct an arrangement of letters resembling the word Ray pronounces, you'll have to imagine it. At most contests, by the second or third day, the folks at the briefing are greeting him with their attempt at "Morning!"

Today, Ray was greeted with a well rehearsed "There is a high over Michigan." And there was. Enough said. Little trickier today, though. There was also a cold front beginning to swing through the area. From the northeast. That's right, a nor'easter'.

In Ohio. In June. (We do, occasionally, see northeast cold fronts. We call them "blizzards.") So Ray was somewhat concerned about his prediction data. His soundings and predictions for details such as trigger temperature were based on the current air mass, but cold front should pass through the area during the task, no real way to determine it's effect. And, of course, there was the possibility of some frontal activity during the day.

So two three hour MATs were prepared. The Task A had New Castle and Oxford as turnpoints. Task B was Richmond-Oxford. Idea was to keep the pilots in the known air mass as long as possible, and give them the opportunity to come into the new air if it was in their favor. Grid time at 1130 in an attempt at an early start.

Well, no. The ships were out there, but the sky was blue, and the temperature just couldn't quite reach predicted trigger. Sniffer 1, Ray Galloway actually asked to stay on the ground a little longer, but CD McQuigg insisted he take off at 1215. He was back at 1233 and we could hear his "I told you so" before the canopy opened. But we could see the beginnings of cu overhead, and all morning Ray had been saying that when the thermals did pop they would pop big time, so we put him back up at 1240. He stuck, sniffer 2 Don Burns stuck, the launch was underway 1300. All ships gone in 61 minutes, no relights.

Conditions continued to build during the launch. From the ground, the east appeared to be showing overdevelopment already, Andy and his advisors (JL, XM, TA) determined Task B to be the way to go, and it seemed to me that the guys got going pretty quickly after the gate opened approx 1415.

As the afternoon went on, the area east of CCSC opened significantly, the clouds spread out, the cirrus disappeared, In fact, for a while, CCSC was the center of a weaker area, not quite a blue hole. Conditions looked really good to the east. I wondered if anyone would be crossing over, and trying for the "new air." Based on the traces and claimed turnpoints, several did try that strategy, but three or four rolled the dice a bit too early, found nothing they could use in the vicinity, and came back to us. Others made it work to varying degree later in the day.

The other strategy played out was to stay in the western side of the contest area. Mike Smith (XM) used with this approach, running northwest from Oxford to New Castle IN, northeast to Randolph, back past Caesar Creek to Clinton County and home. The top five all appear to have played a variant of this strategy, cat's cradling about the western turnpoints, maybe a dash to the east later in the day. I don't think anyone went farther east than the Outlet Mall, but I am working from the scoresheet and memory, not their traces.

Mike Smith (XM) won the day, bringing himself up to second place, and pulling to within four points of overall leader Sam Giltner (5U). Phil Gaisford (PG) finished second on the day and now lies in fourth place overall. Bill Thar (G8) is keeping the little Sparrowhawk in the hunt, with a very strong third place today. Hank Nixon (OH) and Manfred Franke (HF) finished 5th and 6th on the day and are holding on to 3rd and 5th overall. The top five pilots are currently separated by 89 points – the gunfight is beginning.

Another quick glance at the weather forecast for 15 June shows that the cold front from the northeast is slowing. The frontal boundary is now slightly south of a line along the Ohio-West Virginia border...and there is a new high forming over Michigan.

June 15 – Contest Day 4

I made a couple of administrative announcements at the morning pilot meeting, and turned the floor over to Ray Galloway for the weather forecast. "All together now...There is a HIGH over Michigan." You already know all about this, you might be as bored reading it as I am writing it. I can't find a new way to make it interesting.

CD Andy McQuigg handed out two tasks again. Task A was a 3:30 TAT to Pike County (15 mi radius) then Marysville (15 mi radius) and return. Nominal distance was 147.72 miles. Task B was also a 3:30 TAT to Fayette County (10 mi) New Castle, IN (10) mi and return. Nominal distance of 205.02 mi. No typo, the B task, the "back up" task, was longer than A. That's the kind of contest this has been.

While gridding the gliders several of us noticed it was not getting hotter, it was getting cooler. And the air felt distinctly drier. Ray scoffed, checked his carefully sited thermometer, and discovered that the temperature had dropped four degrees between 1045 and 1145, while the cirrus had disappeared. The same conditions as yesterday, a new air mass was coming in, we were going to have to wait a little longer for trigger temp. But we could see cu forming out in the distance towards the southeast – right on the course line to the first Task A turnpoint.

But it was also getting breezier, so CD McQuigg distributed new task sheets. Same tasks and turnpoints, but he opened the turnpoint areas to 20 mile radii.

P1 was sent out to sniff at 11:45 and quickly returned. We sent him again about 12:30 and he stuck. 70 followed and stuck. Launch commenced at 12:55, completed at 14:00, the task opened about 14:15. The sky was mostly blue at the start of the launch, but by the time the task opened, there were large, flat cu in all the right places. During the launch, I did hear someone comment on radio that the MOA east of CCSC was hot today, but the Air Force knew about us and they were watching. Good. But the cu towards Pike County were starting to dry up. I was too busy directing the launch to really listen to the conversations between CD and advisors, but in the end, the task was changed to CCSC-Marysville-Pike-Lebanon. Everything else the same.

My first real indication of the strength of the day came about 14:30. Ray landed, left his glider, strolled up to Andy and inquired "Did you ever raise the start height?"

"Raise the height? Its 8000 feet! No, I didn't raise the height, what's the matter with you?"

"Well, some of them might get into trouble then. The whole gaggle is in two thermals at about 7600 feet right on the edge of the cylinder."

"You're lying!"

"Andy, I saw 18 knots one time and I was at 2500 feet."

"Bu****it!! Nobody makes a variometer that reads that high! It's broken." This went on for a while, I think you can picture it. (Ray later insisted that he had meant he was finding an average wind speed of 18 knots on the course line.)

Well, maybe.

OS was the first glider back, slightly under minimum time, and the whole fleet was right on his heels, glider after glider swooping over CCSC. Everyone made it home, everyone I talked to was delighted. Among the pilots I talked to, most confessed to tactical errors, lapses in technique, and some difficult spots along the way. Same old story, awesome lift means horrible sink. The three different legs of the task had three distinct characters, and for many, this was still a hard work sort of day.

It appears that the run upwind to Marysville was a near drag race to the turnpoint. The best lift was in the vicinity of eight knots, and the thermal heights were approaching 8000 ft. Doesn't take many thermals like that to fly 60 miles, give or take, and the guys didn't do too much turning on that leg, bumping the cu and working a few streets hard. The run down from Marysville to Pike was crosswind, and that took much more effort. It seems quite a few guys wound up lower than they wanted to on this leg, and then had to dig for a while. For many, the leg to Lebanon was the hardest work, as the cu were starting to dry up and the lift was a bit more uncertain. But once they got to Lebanon, reverse course, stick forward, and hang on. Another strong, but technically challenging day. And universal agreement that changing the task in the air was a really good call.

Today's winner was Manfred Franke, (HF) 243.45 mi @ 67.15 mph ACTUAL (hc=232.89 @ 64.23 mph). Pushing him from behind was Sam Giltner, (5U) traveling 228.40 mi at 62.42 mph (hc=232.56/63.56). And Phil Gaisford (PG) is continuing his strong performance, coming in third with 244.49 mi at 68.43 mph (hc=225.10/63.01) PG's average speed of 68.43 was the highest of the day, closely followed by Hank Nixon (OH) at 68.23 mph.

The outstanding flying of the Juniors is becoming the story of this meet. Today we saw exceptional performances. Cory Sullivan (972) pushed his Libelle into fourth place for the day, flying an actual distance of 217.23 mi at 61.36 mph. (hc= 221.29/62.51) Close behind with 6th for the day is Kevin Christner (2C) in his Mosquito with 220.58 mi at 62.40 mph. (hc = 214.34/60.64) When I asked Cory and Kevin for comments about the day, I received, respectively, "It was excellent, really fun." and "Just awesome". No discussion of tactics, or how these conditions were on this leg, or explanations of why. I think they have the big boys in their sights, and they are just holding the sticks forward and going for it.

So the top five overall moved around a little bit. Giltner is still on top, and his lead has expanded. Nixon hopped over Smith, but only has seven points on him, Franke passed Gaisford. Wally Berry, returning to Caesar Creek (welcome back!) has quietly worked his way up to 6th overall in another Libelle, this one an H301. The Juniors are stalking the top guns, Sullivan in 7th and Christner in 8th. Jeff Russell (TZ) has been flying solidly, always among the high third in finishers, and now has his LS-4 positioned in 9th. Bill Thar (G8) has the SparrowHawk in 10th. Say what you will about handicapping sailplanes, the top 10 is a very interesting mix of gliders and soaring talent!

Note that Uli Neumann (GM) finished 9th for the day, putting three Libelles in the top 10 for the first time since...?

We have had four straight days of excellent soaring. (I have been soaring from Caesar Creek for 14 years and I think today was the best day I have seen.) We have an official contest, but we want more, much more. How long can we keep this up?

Well, the first look at tomorrow's conditions shows...a high over Michigan.

June 16 – Contest Day 5

Including practice days, this is the seventh competition report I have written. These things are hard to write, and it is especially hard to put them together at the end of a long day. I know that many members of SSA read these reports daily, and I now know they are a demanding readership. I have developed an entirely new appreciation for the great work done over the years by Charlie Spratt.

Charlie, I hope you are reading this. I don't know how you have done it, day after day, race after race, year after year. Charlie, my hat is off to you, and I thank you for years of work done well. I can't fill your shoes (there is only one Charlie Spratt) and I sure don't want your job. Please get well, and please come back to us soon.

I know that Charlie would be very disappointed in me if I failed to call out the TREMENDOUS work done by the Caesar Creek "Lime Crew", the youth group that basically makes it possible for us to stage contests. From getting gliders to the grid, to running the ropes and wings during the launch, to removing gliders from the runway at the end of the day, they do the hard, fast moving work. And somehow find a way to check all the equipment, sell lunches, and amuse the rest of us. They have even found the good humor to accept unfounded criticism from irritated pilots. They are: Elisabeth McClaskey, Coleen Neumann, Elizabeth McManus, Cody Smith, James Goebel; Jon Deak, Kat McManus; Philip Neumann, Andy McClaskey, Tim Brown and Shiloh Smith. Well done and thank you to all.

Now then...

Hello from Caesar Creek, where the ground is so dry that field mice are raising tiny dust clouds as they scurry about, and frogs are carrying canteens to the pond. Pilots here are starting to refer to Caesar Creek as "Uvalde North" and "Hobbs East". Now, I know that is a little strong, but we are enjoying an amazing run of weather, and we plan to keep on using it.

But this IS Ohio, and weather MUST change, and today's conditions are a little different.

Ray Galloway opened the weather briefing with "There is a high over....Virginia." ("Vaarhjiinyah.") And I could tell he really relished saying that word. (By the way, in case anyone thinks I am making fun, I am not. My lovely wife Sandy turns the word "four" into a four syllable word as soon as she crosses "the river".)

The Virginia high brings several changes. The winds are now mostly from the northwest, so we turned the operation around. Today we're working from the east end, as we do 80% of the time during spring and summer, but are doing so for the first time during this contest. Ray's prediction is for a day that is mostly blue, but with good thermal strength and predicted thermal heights are in the vicinity of 7000 ft. Winds in the morning are light and from about 320 plus or minus 20, and are forecast to become more westerly as the day goes on. With this in mind, the task CD Andy McQuigg called for today is another 3:30 TAT – CCSC out east to Fayette County, back towards the west to New Castle Indiana, and return to CCSC. (This is almost spanning the contest area.)

Guest sniffers today. Ray Galloway gave up his seat in P1 to Dan Cole, and Hal Enulat joined us for a day in HE. Plus our reliable local expert Don Burns. Andy had them in the air today at little after 12:50. It really took three sniffers to reliably gauge the lift, as it was hard to find and hard to work in the early afternoon. The house thermals were popping, but also cycling quickly. Still, the sniffers managed to climb high enough, fast enough, and found thermals often enough that CD McQuigg decided to launch the fleet, and our five towplanes and Lime Crew swung into action at 13:30. Good, safe launch, everyone airborne by 1437 (I think) and the task opening was set based on that.

Somewhere between the last launch and the opening of the task, WB made a classic radio call "This is the most beautiful and terrifying thing I have ever seen." Way up there, in the clear blue, I could see all the fleet, circling in two gaggles that overlapped. I had been watching this throughout the launch, but had assumed the overlap was simply an illusion due to my offset position. Wally's call gave me shivers, but the guys up there clearly knew what they were doing.

Today, unfortunately, we had a couple of relights. Just a fact of life on blue days, if you lose touch with the group, you are rolling the dice. This is especially true at Caesar Creek, and doubly true down low. We have a couple of reliable house thermals, but if you are over the corn...well, one cornfield heats about the same as another. Concentrating on getting them back out, I missed the start. Most of the guys were gagging together, and I think they all kind of left en masse.

Once they were gone, CCSC adopted a sort of modified weekend operation. We launched a few students, let some of the private owners go out, and listened to 123.30. Sometime about 17:15, we started hearing calls, and the fleet began sweeping in.

We had an Ox Roast tonight, and many members of our club showed up. Many brought friends who have never seen a glider up close, let alone a competition finish. Well, they saw one today. Glider after glider swooped low and fast over CCSC, and the "oooohs!" and "aahhs!" were plainly audible as they came by. (And not all of them coming from "newbies".)

I talked to as many of the pilots as I could while we moved them off the runway. At this time, most of them hadn't yet turned in their traces, and did not know how they stood relative to each other. I will tell you now, their comments, from guys at the top of the scoresheet to guys doing less well, were remarkably similar. "Today was really hard." "It was really work, today." "I made too many small mistakes." "I really screwed myself at..." Blue thermalling at it's best and worst, I suppose. When they had altitude and confidence, they ran like Roger Ramjet. When they were low, they fought for every foot and cursed the guys who left them hanging. Everyone seemed to hit a patch that "ruined" their fine flight, everyone seemed to have a time when they shot past someone else. Despite another set of seemingly excellent conditions, in all regards it was a technically challenging day. One guy who described, in detail, how he ruined his contest beat a couple top guns. A "hot shot" who thought it was an easy day gradually learned otherwise as more and more scores came in.

Sam Giltner (5U, LS-1F) won another day and strengthened his hold on first place overall. From his appearance, just out of the cockpit, he fought for all of it. (200.39 mi @ 52.97 mph / hc=204.04/53.94) Manfred Franke (HF, LS-3a) flew to second place with 202.92 mi @ 54.64 and Mike Smith (XM, LS-8/18) finished in third (240.89 mi @ 56.14 mph.) Mike flew the longest distance of the day. Frank Paynter (TA / Ventus 2Bx) had the fastest average speed of the day at 58.33 mph.

Cory Sullivan led the Juniors again in his H201 Libelle, completing 188.32 mi @ 50.20 (hc= 191.84/51.14) finishing the day in 10th.

In the overall standings, Giltner is still on top, Smith passed Nixon and is 97 points back of Giltner. Franke is fourth, Gaisford fifth. Berry is still hanging tough in sixth, Sullivan is still stalking the leaders in seventh, Russell has moved up to 8th, Kroesch has moved up to 9th, and Christner is still hanging on to the top 10.

It is 22:46. I am finishing up here in the contest office. The scores are posted, but the traces were bounced due to a "web error". (We'll try again tomorrow.) I kind of want to go talk over the day some more and just sit and have a beer with the guys, but I am looking over to the patio and fire pit, and no one is there. I know no one went out for dinner, because we served it here at the gliderport.

I think they have all turned in. It was that kind of a day.

June 17 – Contest Day 6

This report is going to be short, as we have all had a hard day here. The good news is that no one is hurt, and none of the gliders are badly damaged.

Over the years, Frank Paynter and I have spent some time trying to figure out the difference between weather forecast terms "scattered thunderstorms" and "isolated thunderstorms". The best we have been able to come up with is that "scattered thunderstorms" are the ones all around you, "isolated thunderstorms" are the ones directly above you.

This afternoon, sometime around 16:00, Caesar Creek got hit with an intense "isolated" thunderstorm. I do not recall thunderstorms were expected, or even mentioned as a possibility, either in the early forecast, or when the guys took off. There were cu in all quadrants during the launch, and there was some discussion of developing conditions between CD McQuigg, WX Galloway sniffing in P1, and task advisors JL, TA, XM, and WB, both during the launch and while waiting for the task to open. (I try to follow this discussion, but I am serving as "launch director" and that keeps me pretty busy. I listen, but I concentrate on the line crews and towplanes.) I know that the initial task, which I really cannot remember just now, was shortened to a 2:00 MAT with Clinton County (TP 5) being the only called turnpoint. Andy was giving them maximum flexibility to deal with whatever conditions did develop.

We had a good launch, with only two relights. Both arrived back at CCSC after the grid was clear, and I don't think they were on the ground together. Both of those guys launched into what appeared to be pretty good conditions.

I may have nodded off under the canopy at the launch line while waiting to see if any more relights came back. I think it was about 1600 when I realized something was wrong.

The whole northern sky was one gray mass, and I hoped Andy had noticed it from his vantage point. (CCSC patio, where he usually supervises the launches, starts, finishes, and landings.) I started up to the patio about as quickly as I could go, but before I got there, I heard Andy communicating the rapidly deteriorating conditions at CCSC to the pilots on 123.3 Andy was doing more than watching the sky, he was studying the situation via one of weather websites that provide radar depiction. I was told the storm was isolated, in that it was singular, but it was also pretty widespread. It apparently grew up very quickly.

I know Andy declared a safety finish, it must have been about this time. Almost as soon as I stepped onto the patio, I saw the first glider approaching, and I heard others announcing their intention to do so. So I returned to the runway, where things were quickly getting very busy. And very wet.

Something like half the fleet made it back to CCSC, the rest made it into local airports or fields. We saw some real airmanship getting those ships back on the ground in one piece in the gusting winds, driving rain, and lightening. I also want to commend the efforts of the CCSC Lime Crew. They made a maximum effort to clear the runway of stopped ships for the following pilots. I'm not referring to them as "the kids" anymore.

The rest of the fleet came down in local airports or fields. Our retrieve desk had a very busy late afternoon, and the effort we put into developing our color code system for displaying competitor status and retrieve information paid off. (Big time.) Those who had returned, or other volunteers wanting to help out, were able to understand, simply by examining the status board, which pilot needed what kind of help, where, without distracting the retrieve desk personnel from their primary job of collecting the information. Many (maybe all?) of the returned pilots volunteered to go find their fellows, and for that reason, all are home and secure relatively early. (before, say, midnight)

The scorer is still trying to sort everything out, and we will not have a complete scoresheet tonight. From the incomplete scoresheet, John Lubon (JL/ASG-29) won the day with a flight of 136.28 miles at 57.33 mph. (hc=116.03/48.81) JL also landed in a farm field a few miles from CCSC after taking a safety finish. Ryszard Krolkowski (RW/SZD-55) is currently shown in second for the day with a flight of 104.31 mi at 50.79 (hc=98.04/47.7) Ryszard made it back to CCSC. Sam Giltner (5U/LS-1F) is shown in third, flying 107.21 mi at 44.37 mph (hc=109 mi / 45.2 mph.) Sam also accepted a safety finish and landed in a field near CCSC.

The overall standings have not changed too much as of now. Sam Giltner, Mike Smith and Hank Nixon are still on top, Gaisford took back fourth from Franke, who is fifth. Jeff Russell has moved up to sixth. John Lubon made a big move from 19th to 9th, Krolkowski moved from 20th to 10th.

These are very preliminary scores. Due to the retrieves, we are still missing some traces, and we'll sort it out in the morning. But I now know all of the pilots and ships are back at CCSC and safe.

A couple of the ships are nicked, one or two may be out of the contest due to parts availability or repair time, but none are seriously damaged. (I know John Murray has already restored George Green's "5" to flight-worthy status, and he may be working on others.)

June 17 - Contest Day 6 Follow-Up Report.

"Red sky in the morning, Sailor take warning!
But red sky at night, sailor delight!"

Probably originating with the Phoenicians, this is the world's earliest, and still best known, technique for predicting weather for the day. (And maybe the most reliable?)

But the early morning sky was not red on 17 June. In fact, at 05:50 it was lead gray and there were raindrops falling out of it. Great big fat ones, making splat, splat sounds on my patio. This was a sort of a surprise, some rain had been in the forecast for overnight, but it was forecast as a slight chance between midnight and 3:00 AM. I called up the Unisys weather site, checked the weather, and saw that we were under the last of the rain. Good enough.

Ray Galloway applies a disciplined, studious approach to weather prediction at a contest. When I stepped into the contest office, I found him in the same place, at the same time, as I have found him for a week, hunched over his two computers, crunching numbers. Ray does not parrot back data taken off a single site, he uses multiple sources, he looks at their synopses, he looks at their raw data, and he produces his own forecast. I know he was getting contradictory pictures of the forecast from the different sources, but the contradictions seemed to be with respect to cloud levels, expected heating, etc. There was nothing in the numbers from the various sources that indicated thunderstorms were a real possibility. To get a better understanding of some of the technical details of the forecast, Ray called the National Weather Service center in Wilmington, OH, 12 miles away. There was no discussion of any significant weather. (Ray explained this in detail to the competitors at the Monday pilots meeting, and I don't propose to repeat it here.)

So, we had a forecast that indicated a better than usual soaring day in the Caesar Creek vicinity, we have a close contest going, and it seemed appropriate to try to get a racing day in. You know the rest, or, if you don't, see the earlier report for Day 6.

With all the traces finally in, Ron Schwartz (434/ASW-20) won the day. Ron managed 133.60 miles at 57.69 mph. ($hc = 119.78 / 51.72$) John Lubon (JL) fell to second, Ryszard Krilowkowski (RW) to third, and Sam Giltner (5U) finished fourth.

The overall standings are still Giltner, Smith, Nixon, Gaisford and Franke, as I reported last night, but a couple of the gaps are closed more now than then. There is a more significant shake up between 6th and 10th, with Jeff Russell moving up to 6th and Schwartz and Lubon making their presence known.

I am working off of the scoresheet and some notes I made, but it seems to me that 20 of the 41 starters made it back to Caesar Creek. (Some having taken safety finishes, and then coming back in.)

Safety finishes played a big factor in the outcome. Three of the top four, five of the top ten took safety finishes. Ron Schwartz, John Lubon, and Sam Giltner had similar flights, heading east after the required Clinton turnpoint towards Chillicothe. Trying to get home from the east, they were flying into the worst of the rain. All found themselves in near IFR conditions, being washed from the sky, and all found fields to park in. I think Ron got the worst of it, his glider had to be disassembled, carried out of a field and over fences in pieces, etc. He was still hosing the mud off of it on Monday morning. Jeff Russell also took a safety finish in the same area, with similar results, having to remove the glider and carry it, in pieces, for a considerable distance before they could get it into a trailer. George Green was another who had to park his glider, 5, in a field on short notice and did a pretty good job of it. George blew a tire on landing, but was able to find a replacement in the inventory of Eastern Sailplane. In all, nine competitors chose to make safety finishes. Marty Nasadowski, and Jim Price made it back to Caesar Creek, others came down at other local airports.

Curt Lewis hit turbulence so severe it bounced his gear down. Curt then discovered his gear would not lock, and he was very worried about it collapsing and the glider sliding to halt and blocking our runway, but he lined up to roll long, set the glider down very carefully, and the gear held. Later examination did reveal a bent actuating lever. Must have been quite a ride for a few seconds. Or a few lifetimes, depending on your perspective. Working together with several other competitors, Curt was able to repair 95 sufficiently to be coming onto the field today just in time to learn that we were canceling the day. But it is good to have him back with us.

Mark Hawkins managed to find his way to one of the small, local private airports, Frith, but found the runway in "disrepair". Actually, it appears that Frith is still private, but no longer an airport. Hay, or something like it, is three feet high in the area that used to be a runway. Mark groundlooped on touchdown, and unfortunately, the reverse load on his ailerons caused more damage than can be fixed before the end of the contest. We are sorry to lose Mark.

Wally Berry worked his way up to Madison County, some 40 miles north east of Caesar Creek, and wins the prize for landout farthest away. I am a little bit foggy on which pilots went and helped out whom, but I do know Frank Paynter helped go pull Wally out of Madison County. Other popular places to escape to were Clinton County with Joe Jackson, Joe Simmers, Kevin Christner, Bill Thar, Les Dutka, and Cory Sullivan sheltering from the storm there. Kevin was coming into CCSC for a safety finished, looked into the dark wall of water, and decided that a few points weren't worth going in there, and turned away early. Good judgment, Kevin. A little airport named Double J was also popular, with George Vakkur and Mike Shakman going there.

It appears several guys had good days going before the storm hit. Some of the competitors, eyeing the sky, made tactical decisions to work close in turnpoints and not get too far from Caesar Creek. Others rolled the dice and pushed out to Chillicothe. These guys got speed and distance points, but wound up trying to come back to CCSC in the face of the storm. I am not presuming to second guess either approach, I am just pointing out that there were differences.

This day is going to be recounted for years over campfires, and I don't want to pre-empt the pilot's rights to tell their own tales. Find one of them and ask for their story.

Oh - on Monday, 18 June I stepped out onto my patio at 0550 and there was a red sky. So, much later in the day, when more sophisticated technical tools convinced me that a serious storm would hit Caesar Creek in mid afternoon, I was inclined to believe it. But it didn't happen. I don't know what conclusion to draw from this.

June 18 – Correct Standings for Contest Day 6 and Comments on Safety Finish Scoring

Safety finishes are hard. They are hardest on pilots, of course, and I know some tough decisions were being made in those cockpits. Not just about whether to keep going, or when and where to set down, but the tactical decisions on what to attempt for the day.

And of course they are hard on the crews who have to sweat out their pilots.

Safety finishes are also hard on scorers. They are harder when they occur during a MAT day, harder still when the scorer is soaked to his skin and tired from helping clear the runway of gliders during a storm.

While discussing safety finishes with pilots and other interested parties, the term "safety cylinder" has been used. It is not an accurate term, and I think it leads to some confusion. There is a safety region, it is constructed from an inverted cone and a cylinder. The inverted cone has it's tip located at the finish point, it's base is 1000 ft above the finish point, the base has a radius of 5 miles. Above the cone is a cylinder of the same 5 mile radius. The safety finish may be awarded to any competitor that enters the safety region. If the entry is to the cylinder, above the cone, the competitor is scored as if he had completed the distance to the finish point, and his time is based on the time of entry to the cylinder plus 5 minutes. (The assumed time to complete the credited distance.) If a competitor enters the "safety region" through the cone, the floor, so to speak, then the competitor is given credit for the distance to the finish point and the finish time is computed based on the distance from the point of entry at an assumed speed of 60 mph.

When we began scoring the safety finishes, we discovered that although Winscore has a "safety finish" check box in one of the input windows, it did not score the finish differently. Our scorer discovered, through trial, error, and iteration, he had to analyze and score all of the safety finishes by hand. This eventually included a fix by fix analysis of all those competitors who were attempting to enter the safety region from below the floor. (One of our initial efforts granted everyone who penetrated the five mile "ring" a safety finish. That was a mistake. We later assessed competitors to be above the minimum height for entry to the safety region by incorrectly interpreting their height from their traces, the old MSL vs AGL issue. Our mistake.) Finally, to be sure that we were doing this correctly, we sought a clarification from SSA Competition Committee regarding a couple of questions.

We believe the scoring for 17 June is now correct.

Ryszard Krolikowski (RW/SZD-55) won the day traveling 104.31 miles at 50.79 mph. (hc= 98.04/47.74) Mike Smith finished second with 98.61 miles at 46.70 mph. (hc= 91.39 / 43.28) and David Martin came in third with 103.23 miles at 47.55 mph. (hc=91.4942.14). Corey Sullivan's 52.44 miles at 27.43 mph led the Juniors with a 19th place effort. (hc = 53.42 / 27.94)

Three competitors trying for a safety finish in the vicinity of Caesar Creek failed to enter the safety region – John Lubon (JL), Ron Schwartz (434) and Sam Giltner. (5U). If a safety finish is not achieved, then the flight is scored the same as any other incomplete flight. The others claiming a safety finish were either awarded their finish, or were scored for a standard finish. (Some competitors claimed a safety finish, but never flew out of, or even loitered in, the safety region and landed at Caesar Creek.)

Once the safety finish issues had been determined, we then had to rescore the entire contest due to the fact that several competitors had not completed a minimum handicapped distance. This affected the total value of the day, and the individual day scores of all competitors. This, in turn, affected the overall standings in the contest.

The overall standings have been shaken up somewhat. Mike Smith is now in first place, leading Hank Nixon by 46 points. Phil Gaisford has climbed into third, 82 points back of Nixon. Manfred Franke is now in fourth and Sam Giltner is in fifth.

It is a wonderful day here, we are looking forward to getting this out of our system by going racing.

June 18 – No Contest Day (Almost Rain.)

A heart breaker. We had an early forecast for a stunning day, we built the ships, and formed up on the grid. Then we put them away again.

When I first saw Ray Galloway's forecast today, just before the morning pilot meeting, I almost asked him to look at the data again. CD Andy McQuigg demanded it. Ray was showing potential thermal heights of 10,000 ft. In Ohio? No way. But – numbers are like that, they are what they are. But there were problems...

One of the big ones was trigger temp. Ray was calling for a trigger temp of 90F and was predicting this would occur about 1330. The cascade of events from this number would lead, with a good, fast launch, to the task opening around 1500. And therein lay another problem, and this one could be serious.

We had frontal activity to the west of us. When we began looking at it, we saw a line of thunderstorms from about Louisville KY to Terre Haute IN and they were heading right to us. A good deal of time was spent looking at this, and the more we looked, the more we came to believe that front would get to us at just about the time the task opened. (When I say "we looked", I mean several experienced pilots checking several sources of weather information.) The storms looked as if they could be as intense as that of the day before, but these were not "isolated", this was a long line of squalls.

Including the official contest practice days, and an "unofficial" practice day of Saturday, 9 June, we have flown 9 straight days. Many of the competitors had a very long night last night, at the end of a very long day. The combination of tired competitors, slow roast heat, and predicted bad weather made this decision clear and easy. CD McQuigg cancelled the day sometime around noon.

There was some time for non-contest flying. Ron Ridenour was kind enough to offer some of the Lime Crew rides in his Duo Discus. Very much appreciated. A couple club members also made flights in CCSC equipment.

As day went on, we saw lots of prefrontal development and some towering cu formed to the west around 15:00, so the club flying was shut down and the equipment put away.

It is now 17:15 I am at my home, 8 miles north of CCSC, and nothing much has happened. And it doesn't appear any significant weather will be here soon. The cu are gone, the sky is blue again, it is still cooking hot, and the winds are kicking up. What had been on the radar is gone. ???

All we can do now is wait to see what tomorrow brings.

June 19 – No Contest Day (Real Rain)

This one was easy.

We have been expecting rain today for four days or more. Day dawned gray and never really improved much. I think rain began falling about 14:30 or so.

But we didn't get much of it. Enough to settle some dust, green up the grass, cool things off. By sunset, it was starting to clear again, and there is good, cool air coming in. We expect the last two days of this contest to be excellent soaring days.

We enjoyed a very nice catered dinner on the patio tonight. Spaghetti with or without meatballs, and many Italian side dishes and appetizers. I think the gang enjoyed it. Watching them, it seemed to me that some of the guys were working on increasing their wing loading in anticipation of the improving conditions.

So, we have had two days of rest to recharge, and we are looking forward to a strong finish.

June 20 – Contest Day 7

A fine morning. Cool and clear, light wind from the northwest, and little dew on the ground. It is still dry, even after a rain day. We're going to have a good day. Of course, that is just my opinion.

At the pilots meeting, Ray Galloway puts numbers behind the same conclusion. "There is a high over...(talk about anticipation)...Illinois." Big laugh from the pilots. Trigger temp of 76F about noon, high for the day predicted to be about 82F, and if so, thermals to over 6000 ft msl. This forecast was disappointing to some of the competitors, who really have started to expect Uvalde numbers, but we long time CCSC'ers consider this to be a pretty good summer forecast. Ray predicts the day will be blue, and the visibility will be outstanding. Keep yours eyes on the fiberglass cloud.

Task for the day is a 3:30 TAT. First turnpoint is northwest to Randolph County, then south to Connersville IN, then back east to Outlet Mall, and return to Caesar Creek. Fifteen mile rings about the first two turnpoints, 10 mile ring about Outlet Mall. Nominal distance of 202.19 miles, minimum distance is 134.98 miles, maximum distance is 272.34. And when they get here, they will be coming straight in from the east.

Sniffer P1 launched, reluctantly, at 1216, whining about how there was no use going before trigger was reached. Well, maybe it wasn't quite 76F, but the treetops were moving, in multiple places about the gliderport. One of those "breezes" came by and took the hat off my head. Curiously, once we got P1 to go, he stayed. Sniffers Burns and Hegele also stayed up and quickly found usable lift.

TZ was the first competitor up at 12:38. The five towplanes and the Lime Crew are starting to rock now, and the launch took 58 minutes. This included one relight and several knotted rope replacements. Well done. During one quiet moment during the launch, I noticed the farmer working the field on the east end of our field had stopped his tractor, climbed onto the roof, and was watching our operations. Now, when you can get a farmer to stop working for a while, you know something special is happening. When I had a time to look around, one thing I kept checking was the exceptionally well marked thermal to the north of CCSC. At least half the field seemed to be circling from 2000 to 4000 agl just over my shoulder. Bright sunshine, almost no haze, all the gliders could be easily seen and it was truly beautiful. No wonder he had stopped to just stare into the sky, I wanted to join him. But there was a Pawnee pointed right at me, and more gliders to launch.

I think there might have been a small cu or two early in day, for some reason, I think I remember seeing them. But I am pretty sure I never saw one after 1500. I also got the impression, just from hanging around the glider port, that there were long periods of still air. We would have breezes and even some strong gusts, but then it would go hot and still. Sometime around 1600 the retrieve desk received their first call in from a land out.

Apparently, it was blue all the way around the course, so the strategy today was to stay with the markers. "Fiberglass cloud" is probably too strong, but you had to have friends.

We are not hosting a dinner tonight, so many of the competitors have left the gliderport for dinner, but the general impression I got from talking to a few competitors is fleet sort of stayed together on the run up to Randolph County, but the 15m radius about Randolph spread them out. (Exactly the effect CD McQuigg was looking for.) So it was harder getting to Connersville, IN, and harder still crossing the big blue coming back to east to Outlet Mall. Conditions were typical Ohio, don't get below 2000 and try hard to stay higher than that. But you can't take the time to climb above 5000 ft, and lots of thermals wouldn't get that high. Lots of 1.5 knot junk, some 5 knot stuff scattered in there somewhere, do the best you can.

So, once again, we had a technically challenging day, although not as strong as those preceding it. More than one pilot told me, with rueful looks, "Today was not fun." Although whenever I offered to let them replace me as launch director tomorrow so I could fly, they declined. So I suppose it was not that bad, either.

One observation I heard from more than one top pilot is that once they separated themselves from the pack, they flew faster. Blue thermal effect? When with others, you let them help search, when by yourself, you just pick a course and roll the dice? I don't know.

And they are working for the distances they are getting. As before, most guys are getting out of their cockpits somewhat disappointed in their results. I don't think it is false modesty, I don't think it is part of a psych job, I think they know they are in a fight with other guys who are also working hard. Most all spoke of getting too low or too slow at some point, leaving a thermal too early, passing up too many OK thermals looking for the big one they knew had to be there. Sometimes it was. Sometimes it wasn't. I think about five or six failed to finish today.

Sam Giltner shook off the disappointment of Sunday's incomplete task and won another day, pushing LS-1F 5U for 171.54 miles at 48.32 mph. (hc = 174.67/49.20) Paul Oldershaw brought 11L (Ventus B 16.6) home in second with an amazing 217.17 miles at 55.50 mph. (hc=190.57/48.70) Paul's flight was both the longest and fastest flight of the day. Well done Paul! And Phil Gaisford is continuing perform steadily at the front, finishing third for the day with 190.95 miles at 52.38 mph. (hc=175.81/48.23) And also notice that Bob Salvo had an excellent flight into 4th for the day. Devin Bargainnier led the Juniors today, finishing tenth. (hc = 169.21 miles at 45.30 mph.)

With one day remaining, we have a narrowing gap at the top of the scoresheet. Mike Smith is still on top with a 33 point lead over Hank Nixon. Hank, in turn, has 44 points over Phil Gaisford. Sam Giltner is back in fourth place, 13 points back of Gaisford. Ninety points separate the top four. Behind them are Manfred Franke in 5th and steady Jeff Russell in 6th. Corey Sullivan is the top placed Junior in 11th. (Note – there were a couple of landouts and they have not yet been scored.)

So, we are coming to the end of what has been a remarkable contest. One day to settle it. Ray Galloway is once again working alongside me in the contest office trailer, but he is being somewhat closed mouth about the forecast. (He hates to make any predictions until he has data from several sources and can compare them.) So I am stuck with an earlier forecast that predicts a thirty degree temperature swing between the low and the high, but the air is so dry, I tend to think it will be blue again. We'll find out in the sky tomorrow.

June 21 – Contest Day EIGHT!!

“CD, Papa 1”

“Papa 1, go.”

“CD, this sure is a great day to end a contest!”

Ray Galloway at 12:38 on 21 June, partway through the launch.

Many hours later, I still agree with Ray.

Waynesville, Lebanon, Franklin and the rest of Warren County Ohio are served by a small paper called the Western Star. (Stop laughing. When they started the paper in 1807, it WAS the American west.) The headline for 21 June read “Praying for Rain – Drought changes everyday life across Warren County.” The forecast for the weekend is rain, and folks are looking forward to it.

But 21 June is not rainy, it is clear and warm, as beautiful a first day of summer as could be hoped for. Ray Galloway opened up the daily weather brief with his now very familiar “Mohrnin” and received a very passable return greeting. “There is a high over...Kentucky.” Well, why not? Might as well try one from another location. “Trigger temperature today will be about 81F at about 1230. Maximum thermal height will be about 7500 msl at about 4:00, but if we get two degrees warmer than predicted, we will get another 1000 ft.” Now, I know that the TAFs for 1600 at CVG, DAY, and CMH all call for broken at 18-20K ft. Ray does not believe this and predicts it will be another blue day. By now, I am willing to put my faith in Ray and say to hell with the TAFs.

With a good forecast in front of him, and little spread between the top contenders, CD Andy McQuigg called what I think was a very good task as the primary. From CCSC northwards to Grimes (14), a little airport north of Urbana OH. (Grimes has several nice features, including a great café and a B-25 undergoing restoration by volunteers. Don’t ask me how I learned all this.) From Grimes southeast to Pike County (30), then back to the west to Hook (16) which lines them up for the charge into Caesar Creek. (Boy, am I looking forward to the finishes tonight!) Twenty mile radii around Grimes and Pike, 5 mile radius around Hook. Nominal distance is 220.23 miles. (min = 138.97, max = 304.24) As always, Andy also had two back up tasks prepared. I had a feeling we wouldn’t need them. As things turned out, I was right, but wrong at the same time.

This morning, we took a big group picture. All the sailplanes in their grid positions, the towplanes alongside, and all of the pilots, their crew, and the CCSC support crew. Afterwards, we could feel the thermals kicking off all about us. Ray Galloway was convinced that we needed to reach 81F for trigger, but our other sniffer, local ace Don Burns, was convinced it was soarable and asked us to launch him about 12:05. I was pacing the grid, wanting to get going myself, and gladly sent him out. Don stuck immediately, Ray quickly followed, at about 12:15. Both sniffers found usable lift and we were launching the grid about 12:30. Ray made the radio call quoted above shortly into the launch. From that moment on, I knew we were going to have a great day. The Lime Crew and the five towplanes pulled the grid out of Caesar Creek in 58 minutes.

But today, nothing is easy. There was some cirrus north of CCSC and that was right on course line to the first turnpoint. Andy tried to poll his task advisors, and others, regarding the possibility of a task change, but this was greatly complicated by a stuck mic in the vicinity. Not the usual static and squeal, we got to listen to vario tones. (Whoever it was works lift well.) You could sort of hear, and sort of transmit for very short periods, but longer transmissions produced all sorts of awful sounds. No form of communication seemed to be working, and frustrated pilots, all of whom probably knew better, kept yelling stuck mic into the radio. CD McQuigg and TA tried to organize a fleet-wide switch to 123.5, but they were never able to get that accomplished. Nothing worked. Eventually Andy gave up and stuck with Task A.

On the good side, for the first time during this contest, we were not visited by large yellow and red wide body freighters, passing through the start cylinder, all friendly-like, during the launch. Or, perhaps we were, but I never saw them and no one was able to get an alert call through the squealing on 123.3

The stuck mic made calling back starting times near pointless. Some guys tried and penetrated the racket, others may have tried and failed, others may have simply decided "why bother?" Andy and I, and the Lime Crew, and everyone else on the gliderport stared into the mostly blue sky until we were convinced no one was left up there. We weren't even sure everyone knew when the gate opened, but we were pretty confident they were all on their way. (According to the scorer, no one left early, so I guess they got the information eventually.)

And so the wait began.

We started getting indications that the day was not quite as strong as we had been led to believe about 1500, as the calls began to come into our retrieve desk.

As contest manager for this event, I had to worry about many things, and one of the things that worried me the most was the large number of crewless pilots entered in the competition. To help us deal with the problems that we expected to arise from a bad weather day and many pilots doubling up, we developed a color coded system for retrieve desk cards. We put large colored dots on the standard SSA form. A blue dot signified that as far as we knew, the competitor was on task. A green dot meant he had returned to Caesar Creek and reported in. A yellow dot meant he was down at an airport and requesting an aerotow retrieve, and a red dot meant he was down in a field somewhere and needed a ground retrieve. So, the simple concept was that those competitors without crew would help each other out, but they didn't need to bother the retrieve desk personnel for information – all they had to do was check out the color code on the cards. We gave it a real test by fire on Sunday.

I used it a lot today, too. Today was hard, lots of guys went down. I spent most of the late afternoon and evening pacing back and forth between the lookout platform we call the crow's nest and the retrieve office, checking on status by glancing at colors. I could already tell that this was a very challenging day. Still, many competitors did make the task, so several must have gone down while rolling the dice. Well, we wanted them to duke it out, and they did.

Listening to pilot talk in the early evening, I get the impression that the task today was just plain hard at the start and got worse as the day went on. On the first leg, the run north to Grimes, there were cu visible on course, but they were hard to reach. Usually, once you got there, they were gone. Most of the guys hitting Grimes did not penetrate very deeply into the cylinder. The run from Grimes to Pike appears to have been the task breaker for quite a few. I heard there was more cu on this leg than any other, but lots of it was false, and there were a lot of low saves and digging here. And it was a long run, while the thermals may have been weakening. Everyone agrees that the pull from Pike County to Hook was the hardest. There was more wind higher up, it was right on their noses, and the thermal strength continued to decline. Guys were cranking back their MacReady settings and thinking their contests were ruined. As they got closer to CCSC, some just took advantage of the convenient gliderport below. But others continued to just tag Hook, while praying for something strong off the infrastructure below, and then ripped back to CCSC.

The nominal distance for today's task was 220.23 miles. No one achieved it, in fact, when you factor in the handicaps, no one even came close. Yet another hard, technically challenging day. (I know I have said that several times in the past few writings. Well, it is what it is.)

During this contest, we have been presenting all of the individual day winners with a bottle of wine, specifically, "Pride of Dayton" which features a nice rendering of Wilbur, Orville, and the Flyer on the label. (The wine is actually produced in Macedonia, and "Pride of Dayton" refers to the Dayton Peace Accords, but hey, for a glider contest near Dayton, Ohio, how can you not use it?)

It was a distinct pleasure to present the day winner award for 21 June, the toughest day of the contest, to my longtime friend Frank Paynter. (TA/Ventus 2Bx). Frank won by flying one of the longer distances of the day, 198.58 miles, at 53.38 mph.

For second place, we had a rarity, in fact, no one can tell me if it has ever happened before. We had a dead tie. Mike Smith (XM/LS-8) and Don Kroesch (DK/Genesis II) finished the day with identical scores. Mike flew 169.72 handicapped miles at 45.77 mph. Don Kroesch flew 175.96 hc miles at 45.81 mph. Motti Pikelný pushed his ASW-24 into fourth place.

All but one of the top five overall at the start of the day hit the dirt somewhere along the course. And there were more landouts, or airport landings, deeper into the field. I suspect there were more than a few "go for broke" decisions made today, and they didn't always pay off. The landouts really shook up the overall scoresheet.

Mike Smith is the 2007 Sports Class National Champion. Every pilot I have talked to has told me that Mike flew well during the entire contest, and his daily scores show it. Mike earned this victory with daily consistency.

Jeff Russell (TZ/LS-4) finished second overall. In an earlier daily write up, I used the description "steady" and I thought it apt. Jeff flew an excellent contest, always finishing with the leaders, always flying well.

Donald Kroesch, (DK) after surviving a harrowing landing on Sunday (seen it on YouTube yet?) persevered to third place.

Sam Giltner won three days outright, pushed hard on this last day, but landed out and finished 7th overall. Hank Nixon, Phil Gaisford, and Manfred Franke also had good contests going, and chose to go hard for the win or to move up. They didn't do it, but a good try by all.

Corey Sullivan emerged at the top of the Juniors, finishing 14th. We missed Corey at the evening awards banquet, but he had to leave for home. He graduates from high school tomorrow. Devin Bargainnier and Kevin Christner also served notice that they are going to have to be reckoned with in future contests.

We have looked at a few statistics in this contest, but one sticks out. At the end of day eight, the 42 contestants had flown a total distance in excess of 56,000 miles, over eight days of very competitive soaring.

It is 10:46. The gliderport has gone so quiet I can hear the frogs in the pond from the office. Many contestants have already left for home, most of the rest have bedded down for the night. (No, really.) I need to join them, I will have a long day tomorrow, cleaning up the clutter, restoring Caesar Creek to its non-contest condition, and completing SSA reports. But there is one more thing to write.

During these 10 days, many of you have emailed me to tell me that you enjoyed these reports. I cannot express how much I appreciated those emails. I thank all of you from the bottom of my heart.

Dick Holzwarth

Retired Contest Manager – 2007 Sports Class Nationals

Upcoming Events and Fun !

July 16 thru 21 - Youth Soaring Camp at CCSC

We are accepting applications for the 5th annual Caesar Creek Youth Soaring Organization Camp being held July 16th through the 21st. The camp is designed to provide instruction from the beginner through advanced student leading to the awarding of SSA A, B, C, and Bronze badges. Successes in the past camps have led to student solos, transition to other gliders, making new friends, a lot of learning and a lot of fun. We have a lot of activities planned for the youth during the week, which may be of interest to adult members, too. If you wish attend or volunteer contact Buck Towne, Steve McManus, or Paul McClaskey.

August 27 thru 31 - Another Summer Soaring Camp at CCSC

After several years of very successful Youth Summer Camps, we are going to try this year a second camp, open to all members. It will run from Monday, August 27 through Friday, August 31. During that period, we will strive to have a couple of tow pilots and a couple of instructors on hand each day. Coupled with the weekend before this period and the 3 day Labor Day Weekend afterwards, this will provide 10 consecutive days for you to work on flying skills, badges, cross-country flying or just plain old fun flying. So if you are interested, contact Jim Goebel or Pat De Naples and help us plan this event.

Sept 1 thru 3 – Eastern 1-26 Fun Meet at CCSC

On Labor Day Weekend, we will be hosting the Eastern 1-26 Fun Meet. We're expecting 8-12 competitors from the East Coast to the Mississippi and points between. There will be an Ox Roast on that Saturday evening for the contestants, their crews, our club members and guests. Mark you calendars and be sure to block out some vacation time for yourself.

Classifieds

Editor's note: Ads will be re-run monthly unless otherwise advised. Thanks!

For Sale: One share of Redwings Soaring Club, "The Two Best Looking and Flying 1-26's East (or West) of the Mississippi!" Contact Pat De Naples 937-291-1466, or email patccsc@sbcglobal.net

For Sale: LS-1c. 1495 TT, fresh annual, M-Nav, Terra 760, Kuhn trailer, parachute. \$16,500. 937-220-9026 or aaron_sorrell@sbcglobal.net

For Sale: 1977 Glasflugel Mosquito, N303VP, TT approximately 2515. M-Nav, relief tube, nose hook, (CG hook available but not installed), two batteries, Dittel Radio, tow out gear, Komet trailer, \$17,500 Greg McDowell Quivinn2@aol.com 937-382-5065, OH

Wanted: Campground Trailer on the pad. If you have any interest in selling your trailer, please contact me at n774jp@netscape.net or 812-537-3137. Thanks, Jim Price

Submissions for *The Frequent Flyer* should be sent to Tammy Scott at: tspot1@sbcglobal.net

Submissions are due by the Monday before the second Saturday of each month.

Caesar Creek Soaring Club

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See our website at: <http://www.soarccsc.com>