

2011 USA 18-Meter Class Nationals at Hobbs, New Mexico

Hobbs, New Mexico



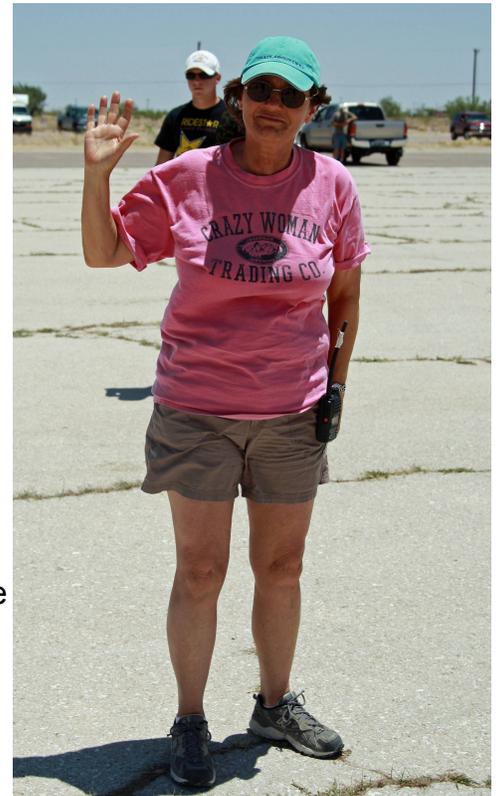
Hobbs, home of the Soaring Society of America and site of the 1983 World Gliding Championships, sits in the corner of New Mexico jutting into Texas, in the middle of the Llano Estacado plain. The plain rises to the West into dry scrubland, descends to the East into Texas farmland, with more dry scrubland to the South, and the entire area

perforated by oil derricks. Soaring contests are held at the former Hobbs Army Airport, once a huge WWII training base with as many as 162 B-17s. 65 years later the huge wooden hangars and old buildings are all gone but for ghostly foundation outlines, and the runways and ramp are falling into disrepair and must be dragged prior our use to remove tall weeds growing through the pavement.

It's normally a very dry area with some thunderstorm activity typical along the dry line and during late summer monsoonal flow. The skies over Hobbs deliver up fantastic classic thermal flying - big skies, massive thermals, huge distances and high speeds. Cloudbases are often below oxygen levels but high enough to avoid fright from the rough terrain below. Hobbs has hosted some classic races, most famously the 1983 world championships where Ingo Renner won open class in the Nimbus III (the 2nd of Ingo's 4 world championships, and the Nimbus III's 2nd world championship appearance).

The 2011 18-Meter Class nationals at Hobbs is organized by volunteers from all over, assisted by some of the SSA staff after-hours plus Llano Estacado Soaring Society members. Edre Maier is competition manager (assisted by husband Steve Maier), and John Godfrey is the Competition Director, all repeat offenders. After the horrible weather at the 2010 Open Class Nationals (including flooding in downtown Hobbs), this year's contest has been scheduled a couple weeks earlier to try avoid the summer monsoonal flow. Moving to the other extreme, for 2011 we have a drought and fire warnings, and no measured precipitation in the last 9 months (think about it - no measurable rain for 9 months). They aren't kidding about a drought - everything is bone dry and the farmers are really suffering. Even some scattered fires north of our task area throwing up smoke and haze.

In decades past, a contest at Hobbs drew 50 to 60 competitors. In 2011 we have only 15 contestants, but 11 of our small field are former or current national team members, 8 former national champions and one world champion. And we're ready to race...



*Contest Manager Edre Maier
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman*

Pre-Practice

Tom Kelly "711" and Al Tyler "8H" started practicing Friday 17th with some ~350 mile MAT tasks. Saturday 18th added Ken Sorensen "KM", Pete Alexander "98", Sam Zimmerman "SZ", Mak (Makoto Ichikawa) flying as a guest in Dave Mockler's Diana "I", and your author Dave Nadler "YO" in my Antares 20E (with the short 18-meter wing-tips). Saturday was a stunning soaring day with the kind of sky you dream about but hardly believe possible. Cu's developed early with bases quickly moving way above our 17,500 racing limit. I self-launched and stowed my motor at around 1300 AGL in a thermal that showed 13+ knots for many turns, a climb rate so fast you have to keep clearing your ears. I flew a MAT task of 452.9 miles at 100.3 mph, fastest in the world today on OLC-speed. Other folks had similar out-of-body experiences - Hobbs classic weather is here – load up your oxygen !

Dave Nadler "YO" Saturday MAT Flight Summary on ILEC SN10B: 452.9 miles at 100.3 mph. You shoulda been here !



Sunday June 19 - Practice Day 1

How often have we heard "*You shoulda been here yesterday !*" at the beginning of a contest ? Really, you shoulda been here yesterday ! Sunday dawns windy. The flag in front of the hotel is pointing upwards, its trailing edge has started fraying, and the pole is shaking impressively. The air is gray with blowing dust. Too windy to fly at over 20 knots gusting well over 30 and cross-wind on the old ramp (our preferred launch area). It reached 107 degrees with some cumulus.

Monday June 20 - Practice Day 2

Less wind, and less cross for launching from the ramp. We had a quick 3 hour MAT with mandatory first turn south at Eunice and a required final steering turn south of the gate. Some of us rested, and 7 of us flew. Blue, blue, blue, except for some blowing dust and smoke from fires to the north and west. Not so hot with peak temperature under 100. Very rough thermals, peaks of 9 knots for a few turns before they spat you out and left you dazed and confused. Average climbs far less ! I took a short tour down south (Wink and Monahans) and came home early (still recovering from Saturday). Doug Jacobs "DJ" had a nice romp of 338 miles at 84 mph, starting later and heading up over the Caprock where it is normally stronger (just don't look down). Lift up to 15k in the blue out there, whereas the southern and eastern areas only yielded around 11k. Gary Ittner "P7" found the wave that was causing all the chop and large areas of lift and sink, and climbed to 14k before starting. Mandatory meeting this evening, and tomorrow we do it for real.

Tuesday June 21 - Race Day 1

The pilots meeting included a welcome from the Hobbs mayor, and a chamber of commerce representative who talked about the energy initiatives in the area, including nuclear and some renewable as well as oil and gas. Weather briefing is a joint effort between Ward Hindman working remotely and Ron Gleason working in Hobbs and presenting. Ward analyzes several different models and gives us a detailed explanation of the large scale weather patterns down to the local effects, including likelihood of cumulus or storm development in different quadrants and the location of the dry line. We also get a picture of the expected temperature, lift strength, and lift height over time (see the weather briefing image). Its a treat to start with such a solid picture of the day. Weather summary: Day 1 looks blue and a bit weaker, forecast task speed 75 mph. Grid at noon...

Quick and efficient launch into an indifferent sky. Hard inversion at 8k (remember ground is almost 4k). Eventually some thermals break through the inversion and I'm briefly over 9k. Then the wind shifts, the thermals weaken as they reorganize, and we all sink back down below the inversion. Task opening delayed. We're on a 3:30 area task, with cylinders south, north-west, north-east, and home. The lift should be better over the high ground to the west, but there's no place to land out there and we're not very high. I remember one Hobbs veteran briefing a new-comer: "*Never, ever, ever get below 9k at Hobbs*". Task opens at 1:30, but nobody is very high, and from the heating forecast we shouldn't start before 2PM for a 3:30 task.

At 2PM folks start dribbling out onto course, no chance to climb out the top of the start cylinder. On course, blue thermals were small and hard to find, in a hazy/smoky sky. I stayed as far west as I could whilst keeping landing options in range to the east, to near the back of the first cylinder following wisps that didn't work. Then North along the edge of the Caprock plateau where there was better lift and working wisps, and I could see the beautiful Guadalupe Mountains by Carlsbad off in the distance. Maddeningly, after suffering in the blue all day, there are cu in the last cylinder ! This area to the north-east is agricultural and often weaker, but perhaps irrigation has provided just enough water to form cu and not enough to kill the lift.

Gary Ittner "P7" smoked us with 81.6 mph by going shallow into the southern cylinder then deeper into the northern cylinder, taking better advantage of the cu. Dave Mockler "JK" was close behind at 80. My 75.3 mph is good enough for 5th today in spite of all the time I wasted trying to not get low, and then digging out when I got low anyway - apparently an experience shared by many today - hard work. Everybody completed, most at speeds better than the 75 mph estimate used in tasking, and while some got stuck minimum speed was still about 67 mph.

Back home the Llano Estacado Soaring Society (LESS is more) folks put on an excellent Lasagna feed for us, featuring Denise's excellent Lasagna ! Thanks ! Also celebrated CD John Godfrey's birthday - a great fun evening was had by all.

Task Sheet - Sunday June 19

SSA SC50 10

Date: 21 Jun 11 (Tuesday) Loc: Hobbs Ind. Airpark (NM83), Hobbs NM USA
 Contest Day: 1 Field Elev: 3707' Lat: 32.77N Long: 103.20W

Weather Synopsis: Acceptable soaring

The low pressure region that brought the precipitation to eastern CO yesterday has moved to the northeast. In its wake, high pressure is building into the contest region causing winds to veer to the southeast and moisten the boundary layer. This new airmass is a bit cooler than yesterday's.

'Trigger' should be a bit later than yesterday occurring at about 1030MDT. The boundary layer is expected to deepen reaching a maximum near 1800MDT producing average maximum lift rates of 5 knots. Cumulus are not expected to form but it will take just a bit more moisture for them to occur.

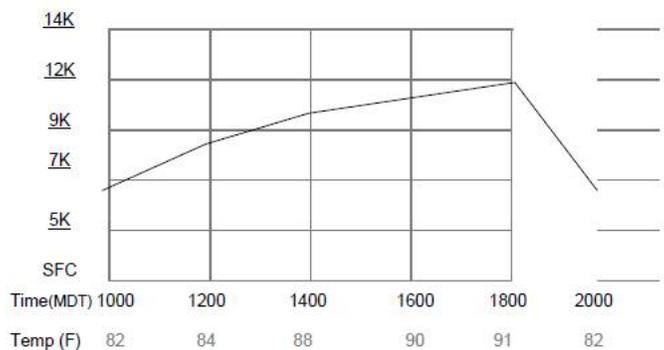
A chance exists for isolated thunderstorm activity to the southeast with a possible overnight shower at KHOB.

Tomorrow, 'typical' Hobbs conditions will begin to reappear: warm, dry, windy and a chance of widely scattered thunderstorms.

Ward Hindman, Certified Consulting Meteorologist (American Meteorological Society)

Winds (degrees/knots; ft MSL): 15MDT

SFC	5,000	7,000	9,000	12,000	18,000	30,000
110/04	120/05	150/04	230/08	260/16	260/17	290/20



Trigger Temp (F) 77 @ 1030 MDT, Max Temp (F) 94 @ 16MDT

Wednesday June 22 - Race Day 2

The weather briefing says a chance of storms, and buildups were visible out west over the mountains north of Carlsbad. John Godfrey and his competition committee John Seaborn "A8" and Mark Keene (normally "7K", flying Karl Striedieck's glider "KS" for this contest) send us north: MAT task with assigned turnpoints Kenna, Muleshoe, Caprock, and then role-your-own task for a 3:30 time-on-task. A mandatory final steering turnpoint "Refinery" just north of Hobbs will keep the finish procession orderly.

Completing just the assigned turnpoints in 3:30 would give a 77 mph speed, but we're going to go a lot faster and will need to add a few more turnpoints. Cu's were popping as we launched and developed nicely to the west, but the first leg was just on the edge of the cu field, with blue to the east, and for a while there were none along the first leg. Start time optimum to me looked like around 2PM, especially I was hoping for the first leg to develop a bit. Most folks started around 1:30, wary of buildups and possible OD to the west. I didn't think it was going to blow up, starting last except for Gary Ittner "P7" who started a minute and a half after me.

Started out the top of the cylinder, and quickly found very strong lift. Briefly thought I was in Uvalde, cruising at 120 knots and climbing straight-ahead under solid clouds. Stayed well west of course line under the better clouds, though did have to slow up and take some weaker thermals approaching Kenna. The second leg featured 8+ knot thermals and 120 knot cruise. Third leg back to Caprock was also very strong, and I briefly flew with Al Tyler "8H" and then Gary Ittner "P7".

As we were averaging well over 90mph at this point, where to go next? There was a fabulous cloud street heading south to Abandoned, which I couldn't resist. This street ended at exactly the same place the clouds didn't form earlier in the day, but fortunately there's the Denton turnpoint right past the end of the street. Turned Denton and headed west towards a great looking cloud near Lovington, almost on final glide around a turnpoint a bit further west.

Got a nasty shock as this beautiful cloud started raining on me and served up massive sink, erasing 2k of altitude before I could say *oops*. Pressed through the sink and found some not-stellar lift on the other side. At this point I hear Al making a straight-in to Hobbs, which sounded way too exciting. The sink from this cloud was right over the mandatory final steering turnpoint "Refinery", so returning to Hobbs may be "interesting". I shifted gears and climbed well over nominal final-glide altitude, burning a couple minutes climbing in so-so lift for peace of mind. Listened to DJ calling a straight-in to Hobbs after he too hit the sink. Sink wasn't quite as bad my second time through and I screamed home at warp speed.

Gary Ittner "P7" burned us again, though 2nd place Dave Mockler and 3rd place Doug Jacobs were only 1 and 2 points behind! I tied with John Seaborn for 4th place, only 17 points behind Gary. Its amazing how tight the speeds and point-spread are today, even though the top 6 all took different routes after the mandatory turnpoints, and many of us flew mostly alone.

Silly stuff heard on the radio today:

CD before the start to advisor Mark Keene: 7K, report?



JB waits anxiously with the pilots to hear today's task from John Godfrey. Photo by Leigh Zimmerman

7K: 7K, no problem, I'm at 13k, plenty of lift...

... But cloudbase was at 10k and Mark was above the clouds in wave.

From birthday boy Dave Mockler: *Smile Ray!*

... Dave wanted to take Ray Gimmeys picture while they were cruising on task.

Pilot who will remain anonymous: XXX, *that was too close!*

Reply: *Yeah, I didn't like you turning inside me either.*

Thursday June 23 - Race Day 3

Today is forecast to be blue with lift capped around 12k. Winds today are quite a bit higher on the surface and higher than forecast. Howling in fact. We launched from the ramp but it was a bit challenging at measured 20 knots cross (check out the windsock photo). Task is 3 hours, two turn-areas to the north and northeast, favoring the area where lift has been a bit better.



No problems climbing out after launch, all seemed normal if not terribly strong nor high lift. Cruised out to the upwind and western side of the cylinder where it should be advantageous to start. Found colossal sink over a very wide area and after a big tour of the start cylinder wound up back in the pattern as the start opened. Yikes. I struggled to climb back up as the fleet started way above me, and ended up starting terribly late, without markers. Not Good. Especially on a blue day with very high wind. Really Not Good. Disastrous.

Struggled along the first leg aided by the 25 knot tailwind. Some streeting in the blue with broad areas of mild lift, with tiny cores somewhere. A great day to fly with other gliders to help locate a center the lift; dumb to be flying alone. Dribbled along the first leg with gradually improving conditions and a climb over 12k. Wisps and a few widely spaced clouds marked still better lift a bit into the first cylinder and on a line into the second. A solitary lenticular high to our west reminded there would be (more) areas of wave-induced sink. Got a climb to 12k+ approaching the 2nd cylinder, then just nicked the cylinder and headed for home into the increased howling wind. Descended interminably finding sink and no lift, chased a couple dust devils that didn't work. At 1500ft AGL I saw a tractor driving into a field and dove for it, watching the dust start to rise in front of me then hooking a 4 knot climb for a few thousand feet. Maybe I can pull this off... Hit a few bumps, but no real thermals, finally at 1000ft AGL in position for a good field I dumped my water and resorted to the magic electric lever - powered my way home. Complete disaster. Only one not to finish today – go directly to the back of the score sheet.

Ray Gimmeys "7V" got in trouble before the start, also finding the sink while trying to position in the optimal start location. He managed to dig out a bit quicker than me, and flew masterfully to win the day. Ray says he was 50 seconds under-time because he found and followed a blue street for a huge distance into wind on the second leg. That's why Ray has won more national championships than he can remember (takes all the fingers and a few toes to count that many). At Friday briefing Ray mentioned he's the only pilot to win 2 USA nationals when over 70 years old! Ray's 83 mph was fully 6 mph faster than 2nd place and former world-champion Doug Jacobs "DJ". Ray pulls into first place, one point ahead of Gary, who's 3rd place finish was more than 90 points behind Ray.



13-
Time National Champion Ray Gimmeys is Gunning for Win #14
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman

Friday June 24 - Race Day 4

More strong wind. Max temperature between 104 and 108 depending on which forecast you believe, and lift should be higher than yesterday. The 3 hour area task is short, but we are suffering a bit in the heat and may again have high winds. The town of Hobbs helped us out by clearing the nominally closed cross runway in case of continued high cross-winds. Concern about the wind prompted gridding on this cross runway, so of course the wind died down by takeoff time.

I had a decent start for a change, and found a street/wave combo on the first leg and climbed up to over 16000ft on the first leg. The lower hazy airmass with southerly flow gradually gave way to clear cool air flowing from the west as we ascended through 12k, thought the lift weakened up high. The low-level southerly street had the higher westerly wind flowing over it; not clear if it was a wave from the mountains to the west or more of a ridge effect, but I could follow a long line of lift or minimal sink with periodic areas of strong lift and smooth cores. Outside temperature was down to 50 degrees at 16000, much more pleasant the 104 on the ramp at take-off time.

Ray Gimmey again showed his mastery of this sport, blistering around 307 miles at 95.59 mph, which was 2 mph faster than DJ in 2nd place. Ray said he had to stop on leg 2 east of Hobbs milk a 2 knoter which gradually built to 5 knots, and thought he was on final glide twice only to find sink and have to stop and thermal again (this after lift of 10-12 knots earlier in the flight). This doesn't seem to have slowed Ray down all that much ! Ray ups his lead by another 35 points on Gary, who is 3rd for the day.

Saturday June 25 - Race Day 5

Temperatures expected to top out from 108 to 110 degrees, several degrees hotter than yesterday. We should have very light winds and likely strong lift to our 17500 limit. Grid set early for 11AM, though if the heating and lift are similar to yesterday optimum start time will not be til near 2PM for a 4 hour task. Mercifully, CD John Godfrey backed off launch time to 12:10 to save us grinding around low in the heat, waiting for the heating to build and lift us higher into cool air, and waiting for the optimum start time. I was off first, and the first few thermals topped of below the inversion, but we broke through by mid-launch and climbed above the lower hazy airmass. Very little wind gradient allowed the strong thermals to punch through the inversion without any shear requiring re-centering. Our start cylinder today is topped at 12000, so we can stay high and cool before the start.

Task is a 4:30 MAT, with assigned turnpoints for the first 350 miles. At our expected speed over 90 mph we'll need to add in a few turnpoints after the mandatory Portales, Hereford, Littlefield, Denver City, and Lovington. I started out the top of the cylinder at 1:24 in back of a gaggle, and continued climbing to almost 17000 feet before heading out on course. Circling gliders marked a line of lift down the first leg, and I screamed along periodically slowing up to climb straight ahead or circle when the lift was over 8 knots. And the day was getting stronger... Lost the gaggle and turned Portales, with wisps and actual clouds ahead on the second leg. Different, clearer airmass up here, with no real boundary. Stronger lift though, my next thermal averaged over 12 knots for many turns.

Turned Hereford and headed south along courseline towards Littlefield with some wisps on course. The clouds were so far above our 17500 foot limit that they were hard to use for locating and centering thermals. Left the clouds and headed for Denver City back into the hazier airmass, slowing up a bit and settling for 7 knot climbs, perhaps too conservative. Turned Denver City thinking I'd head back north after Lovington, but there was a wall of smoke from a grass fire in that direction. Calculated a bunch of turnpoint options on the SN10 and settled on south to Eunice and around one more close-in turnpoint. Took a 5.5 knot thermal past Hobbs, again a bit conservative but the day seemed to be weakening and I was close to final glide. As usual immediately bumped into stronger lift, and ended up on MC 7 120 knot final glide for the last 45 miles. Finished with 433 miles at 94.7 mph in 4:34 (4 minutes over target time).

Again, Ray Gimmey 7V smoked us at 102.66 mph, covering 465 miles with 1 minute 55 seconds over the target time. Al Tyler got out of his cockpit and exclaimed that this was his best soaring day ever and he didn't care about the score, but didn't complain too much when his 101 mph speed was good for 2nd. Wow. Classic Hobbs soaring !

Sunday June 26 - Race Day 6

Today the National Weather Service forecasts a high of 109, which is a bit warmer than yesterday. All forecast models show light winds and taller stronger thermals. Weatherman Ward Hindman is beside himself and announces **"Today the Cumulus will be Round, Firm, and Fully-Packed"** with a 3-mile-thick boundary layer for even stronger conditions than day 5. This stuff is hard to take ;-)

We launched at 12:30, on a 4 hour area task taking us west, north, east, south, west, and north to return home. We should do at least 100mph in these conditions, so at least 400 miles needed. No cumulus at launch, but they developed as the task opened.

I climbed out the top of the start cylinder with a group at 8-10 knots, leaving when it dropped under 6 knots at around 16000 ft. A bit blue on the first nominal leg tempted me into the southern part of the first area (south of Hagerman), and though the clouds weren't spectacular they did work. Not smart tactically as I had no markers in front of me; the group headed more towards the center of the first turn area. Drove too cautiously through the marker-less blue on the second leg, and got caught and passed by DJ as I dithered a bit. Got a bit more disciplined and put the nose down, slowing only to climb straight ahead at 5 knots. Lined up clouds in the second cylinder past Portales, where it started getting really strong, and turned east when I had a nice line of clouds into the next area. At one point I had 12 knots on the averager for several turns. Stayed up near 17500 with the clouds well above me, bouncing along until I again had a line of clouds pointing into the next cylinder and turned. Blasted to a gorgeous cloud that really did meet the weatherman's promise and was rewarded with over 14 knots on the averager for a few turns. Takes great care not to bust the altitude limit when you're climbing this fast ! Followed the clouds past Andrews to the south, with a last solid climb averaging over 10 knots to almost final glide altitude. Turned west and followed clouds, but made a tactical blunder in time management: went a bit overtime and knocked my average speed under 100mph. At these speeds, the slightest dithering knocks your average down promptly ! Finished :14 over at 97 mph, one of the slower speeds today.

Dave Mockler showed us how to do it properly with 453 miles at 111 mph. 2nd place Gary Ittner "P7" picked up 10 points on 3rd place Ray Gimmey, so Ray now leads by 60 points with 3 more days to race. Yup, this is the classic Hobbs weather we dream about, 8 of 15 did over 100 mph – what an unbelievable privilege to fly such toys with this group on such a day !

Monday June 27 - Rest Day !

Rest Day after 6 straight days, with some storms in the area.



*Dave Mockler had smoke coming off his wings after winning Day 6 at 111 mph.
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman*

Tuesday June 28 - Day 7

Monday had a over-development and even some storms on a line from Carlsbad through Lovington, just north of Hobbs. They even got 3" of rain locally under some of the cells – no doubt welcomed by the parched farmers. The blow-off is just sitting up there, providing a bit of shade this morning. Lots of moisture still trapped in the middle layer with wisps in all quadrants. NWS analysis shows a weak occluded front over us along this line. Forecast max temperature is a cooler 100 degrees. Max lift is expected 12k and weaker.

Worried by wildly divergent forecasts with no distinct dry line, the task committee sends us on a 3:30 area task, with possible distances covering a wide range of potential weather. First a large cylinder north-east around Brownfield, then down to Eunice, south-east to Andrews, then steered via Denver City back home. We're treated to great lift at launch, which promptly weakened as task opening approached. One top pilot even got low and landed back for a relight, relights being unheard of in this group (except when someone forgets something, slightly less unheard of). All the alto cloud dissipated, no cumulus, just blue, and the wind picked up to 20 knots from around 145.

Started barely out the 10k top of our start cylinder, sure would be nice to see 12k but gotta go at after 2PM. After a long cruise with no signs of decent lift I got down below 3k AGL, probably should have just kept pressing but I took some weak lift. Decided this could turn into a survival task watching a glider or two struggle well below me, and turned early back towards Eunice. Another 5 miles and I found a 7kt thermal, so I turned too soon... Never mind, press to Eunice, get high, follow some lift lines, turn the back of the Eunice cylinder in lift and head for Andrews. After a long glide with nothing, found myself low over the last decent field before miles of scrub, and milled around watching the activity in the oil field below, stuck sustaining but not climbing. Finally, a group of semis carrying oil drilling equipment forms up and drives in tight formation down a dirt road through the oil-field, kicking up a nice thermal, which carried me back from below 1.5k AGL to over 10k MSL. Turns out Haliburton fracking operations are good thermal triggers – who knew. Turned north and bounced a blue street into final glide range, and turned Denver City (where it always sucks) comfortably high for once.

Winner Gary Ittner found good lift on the first leg, but explained he had to take a couple 2kt thermals near Denver City to convert a 5-white-knuckle final glide into a 4-white-knuckle event, for 263 miles at 74 mph. Gary is now just 25 points in back of leader (and 13-time national champion) Ray Gimmey. LESS fed us a truly excellent Mexican dinner and everyone again had a great time, Thanks !

Wednesday June 29 - Day 8

Should be hotter and a bit less windy for our last two contest days on Wednesday and Thursday. Or maybe not quite as hot and just as windy. In any case there's a strong high over us and our weather briefing calls for little chance of cumulus clouds.

Late start, with cumulus developing at about 2PM. That was quite unexpected and gave us a great run for our 3:30 area task, with stronger than forecast lift pushing us deep into the turn areas. The cloud field extended not far east or south, so we stayed mostly in the area with cloud and were rewarded with strong climbs and decent speeds. I followed the clouds by myself and had a nice flight of 302 miles at 84 mph.

Big upset today ! Leader Ray Gimmey had an uncharacteristic bad day, allowing Gary Ittner to pull into the lead by 53 points. Gary also had a not great day otherwise he'd have a really big lead. Winner John Seaborn "A8" worked the north-south dry-line at the edge of



John Seaborn "A8" takes Day 8 at 95 mph.

Photo by Leigh Zimmerman

the cloud field and smoked us at 94.57 mph over 335 miles; four pilots broke 90 mph.

Thursday June 30 - Day 9

Final race day, and its a shoot-out. Gary Ittner has a 53 point lead on Ray Gimmey. Doug Jacobs threatens at 71 points back. CD John Godfrey tells us at his very first visit to Hobbs for the 2003 nationals, his mentor Charlie Pratt (whom John admires and aims to emulate) called a long MAT task on the final day and landed out the entire fleet. It's blowing hard on the ramp, with temperatures forecast less than yesterday.

Decent lift though very high winds. No cumulus, but adequate lift to get above our 10k start cylinder. Task is a 3:30 turn-area task, with cylinders first north to Portales then south-east to Levelland, and finally south-west to Caprock (nominal distance 282 miles). But the wind is howling from the south, and the return home into wind late in the day will be hard; this is not going to be a cake-walk home to the banquet... I took it easy and stayed high, pressing back beyond Portales where there were working cu, and just nicking the last two cylinders, for a slow 67.68 mph. Many of us had to stop and tank up after falling below final glide on the last leg; there was notable sink in addition to the 25 knot headwind. A few pilots had trouble and very low speeds, and one landed out.

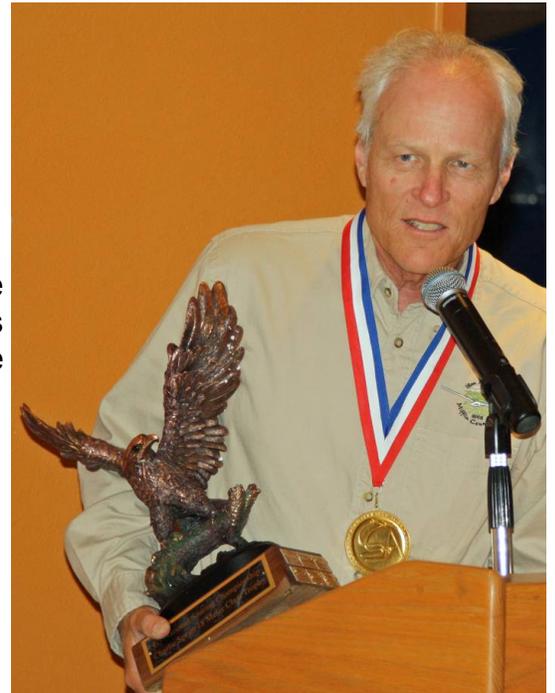
Gary Ittner wins the day at 81.46 mph to clinch the championship. Ray Gimmey and Doug Jacobs both had a tough time down in the 73 mph range to take second and third place respectively.

Epilog - 308 Miles at 82 mph

As scorer Ron Gleason told us gleefully, the average of all flights at this contest was 308 miles at 82 mph. This was one amazing contest, masterfully CD'ed by John Godfrey and his competition committee Mark Keene and John Seaborn. Here are some contest stats from Ron (note only 15 competitors and excluding practice):

- Total distance flown on task: 41,600 miles
- Total time spent on task: 507 hours
- Average miles@speed per task: 308 miles @ 82 mph
- Longest flight: 455 miles (Mark Keene)
- Highest speed: 111 mph (Dave Mockler)
- Shortest completed task: 204 miles
- Tasks not completed: 2 (of 135)
- Point yield $8995 / (\max \text{ potential } 10000) = 90\%$ (one rest day, only 5 points devaluation)
- Damage or incidents: **Zero**

Thanks again to CD John Godfrey, contest manager Edre Maier, Denise Layton, LESS and SSA volunteers (great meals !), task advisors John Seaborn and Mark Keene, weatherman Ward Hindman, scorer and weatherman Ron Gleason, line crew Bailey Layton, Austin Keene, Michelle Pearson, Dalton Robertson, Ben Mayes and Erik Knight, operations manager Bud Copeland, roll times Rhonda Copeland and Cathy Pope, scales and operations Bill McDaniels and Steve Maier, Misty LeBreton, and tuggies Bob Lynn, Harry Smith, Stan Blanton. You guys put on one helluva show, and it was a privilege to participate.



*18-Meter Champion Gary Ittner
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman*

This was truly a Hobbs classic – an epic race.

You missed a great time and a bigger crowd woulda been more fun - you shoulda been here !

Other Photos – Use as layout permits...

Gary Ittner finishing on Day 6, possibly suitable for cover photo. Photo by Leigh Zimmerman.
http://www.nadler.com/backups/Papa_7_finish_Day_6_Leigh_raw.jpg

XXX



*Line Crew Ready To Launch.
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman*

XXX



*Crew Rhonda and Wes Tyler, Brenda Seaborn, and
Michelle Sorenson enjoying wind-blown Hobbs ramp.
Photo by Leigh Zimmerman*

Author Sidebar

This is the sidebar you printed with the reprint of my 1985 safety article – it's really long...

About the Author: Dave Nadler “YO” starting soaring in 1974 with the MIT Soaring Association and competition flying in 1978. Dave won the 1985 regional contest at Sugarbush without functioning variors or flight computer, and the lack of helpful instruments aggravated him so much he started developing a new avionics package. Dave’s flight computer designs introduced many firsts we now take for granted: a database of turnpoints, use of vector wind in all calculations, accurate vector wind measurement, complete task planning including time management, final glide around turnpoints, alternate landing spot location and final glide, and many more. On the first day of the 1991 World Championships in Uvalde, Dave’s first commercial design was in two of the three winning cockpits. Twenty years later in the USA 2011 Open Class Nationals at Uvalde, Dave’s ILEC SN10 was in the open class champion’s cockpit and the day winner’s cockpit 6 of 8 days, and these instruments are flown by thousands of pilots in more than 20 countries. To bring FLARM anti-collision to USA soaring, Dave took a year off from professional pursuits and joined the FLARM team for 2010, contributing to FLARM version 5 and the new Power-FLARM product now shipping in USA. To promote soaring, Dave has exhibited and flown his glider in the Oshkosh AirVenture airshow for the last 3 years. Dave now competes with an Antares 20E electric-powered motor-glider (18-meter and open class), and also flies a Duo Discus and an RHJ-8. Soaring has been a huge part of Dave’s life with over 3500 hours, over 100,000 miles cross-country, and around 100 contests. Dave lives near Boston Massachusetts with wife Renee and parrot Rupert, and flies with the Greater Boston Soaring Club.

In addition to being a regular speaker at SSA conventions, Dave has written many Soaring magazine articles (competition and Aero reports), and is the North American representative for Lange Aviation (builder of Antares gliders). In his professional life, he built and ran a software and systems consulting business, and managed software development and systems for a major international financial market data provider.

Author Photo: Dave Nadler launching in his electric-powered Antares 20E:

