

19th annual POPS Winter Meet

1990

Umatilla, FL

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19th ANNUAL POPS WINTER MEET

They came from all over the United States - in private planes, cars, RV's, and by commercial airline; descending upon Jimmy and Wilma Godwin's Paragator DZ at Umatilla, Florida for the 19th consecutive year. Yes, it's those senior citizens of the skys - Parachutists Over Phorty Society. This year there were over 50 competitors signed up for the Accuracy and Hit'n'rock events. But the fun didn't start with the competition - many of the POPS arrived early in the week and were pumping out as many as 9 to 10 jumps per day each. With a fleet of 5 Cessnas there were skydives involving from 2 to 14 jumpers at a time. Many of the younger POPS eagerly joined in the formation loads to qualify for their POPS 8-way patch, while others spent the week honing their accuracy skills.

Because of a 5-way tie for first place accuracy in 1989, the POPS donated enough money to buy an electronic pad for their exclusive use - and on the Friday before the meet many double-zeros showed up on the screen. On Saturday morning the wind dummy load was sent up to test the stiff breeze. One brave (?) soul exited the aircraft and the others wisely decided to land. The briefing was held and the group waited for several hours until it was decided to give it up and try again on Sunday. One large group decided to spend Saturday afternoon at a local roller skating rink - which resulted in good fortune for some of the hot accuracy folks as Ruben Garcia, a formidable contender, decided to rack-up his knees at this dangerous sport.

At the banquet that evening, TOP POP Bill Wood announced that the POPS Nationals would be held at Maytown, PA, on the weekend of September 22-23, 1990, with fun jumps the week before. The congregation also observed a moment of silence in memory of POPS Warren Hoyt, who had died that week. 76-year-old Warren had been an active jumper until

his untimely death from cancer. ^{With} On a show of hands, it was discovered, (just for the fun of it) that there were 36-pilots among the 100-or-so people at the banquet. During the evening, the crowd was thoroughly entertained by a review of the weeks activities provided by top-notch videoman Mike McGowan who was on hand for the entire meet. Conference Director Don Yarling was on hand to welcome the POPS and to make some USPA awards - and National Director Pat Moorehead offered an official 'thanks' from the USPA BOD for the generous donations that the POPS have made to the U.S. Team Trust Fund.

Sunday was a beautiful day and the wind dummy load lifted off at 7:00 AM - and the meet was underway. It was obvious that the electronic scoring system was needed as there was a 3-way tie for first in the first round. It was also noted that there were more lady POPS in this meet than ever before: six. And all of them very attractive. Love this sport! It was close but in the end Ski Chmielewski's three discs took first place, followed closely by Gene Bland, Artie Perkins, and Garrett 'Snake' Shaw.

And then the fun event: Could you land in the peas, shed your gear, tag the disc, sprint 40 feet, and sit down in a rocking chair in 4.8 seconds? Artie Perkins did - and won first place in the Hit'n'rock event as the crowd cheered. Bruce Brown, Ski Chmielewski and Howard Burling all scored next within 1 1/2 seconds after Artie. Not bad for the geriatric set, eh?

With the meet completed in just 6 hours (208 competition jumps plus eight fun-loads in between) the POPS were gearing up to get back in the sky for more relative work silliness. Seems like you just can't slow these guys down.

by PAT MOOREHEAD, POP 572

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FINAL RESULTS

ACCURACY:

First: Ski Chmielewski - .00
2nd: Gene Bland - .04
3rd: Artie Perkins - .08
4th: Garrett 'snake' Shaw - .09

Hit'n'rock:

Artie Perkins - 4.8 Seconds
Bruce Brown - 5.6
Ski Chmielewski - 6.2
Howard Burling - 6.2