

**18<sup>th</sup> annual POPS Winter Meet**

**March 1989**

**Umatilla airport, Lake County, FL**

POPS A-HOPPIN'

By Bill Wood, TOP POP #8

Perfect weather! In mid-March Jimmy and Wilma Godwin, and their enthusiastic staff, were hosts to the 18th annual Pops Winter Meet, held again this year at Umatilla Airport, Lake County, Florida. This popular event has become a tradition among POPS in the east that want to escape the dwindling winter and other jumpers throughout the United States who know that this is where they can find fun jumps, hot competition, and old pals.

This year 76 competitors registered for 3-rounds of accuracy and one round of good ol' Hit'n'rock.

The gathering actually starts on the previous weekend and the 4-Cessna airforce sometimes flew over 60 loads per day as the Geritol-for-lunch-bunch threw themselves into the sunny skies -some as many as 10-jumps each day. 4-8-12-way dives were common and freefall photographer Mike McGowan was on many of the loads recording the fun. (After each day of jumping Mike labored over his tapes late into the evening, editing and adding music, and then played the results at manifest during the next day's activities.

At the banquet Saturday nite, which was attended by over 150, TopPop Bill Wood introduced the oldest competitor, 75-year-old Warren Hoyt (who, incidentally, made several of his jumps attired as Uncle Sam, complete with white beard, and trailing the Stars and Stripes) and announced he had just enrolled the 2830th Pops. Bill also commented that new members were joining at the rate of one per day. He also announced that the POPS Nationals will be held September 17-24, at Maytown, PA. Earlier in the day the TopPop from the United Kingdom, J. L. 'Lofty' Thomas, paid a surprise visit, competed in the hit'n'rock, earned his PopStar, and was a guest of honor, with his wife, Grace, at the banquet.

Competition?? You bet!! So you think POPS are worn out, decrepit, laid-back has-beens? How about a 5-way tie for first place accuracy - 3 discs each! Not to mention the average of 18 discs per round. And the Hit'n'Rock! - This event works like this: As the jumper lands, the clock starts. He/she must then remove their gear, move to the disc, and sprint 40' to the rocking chair and sit down. Silly, right? How about a winning time of 4.71 seconds! Try it sometime. (5th place was 6.17 seconds, less than 1 1/2 seconds difference.)

Sunday morning brought all of the competitors to the peas to watch the sudden-death chute-out with the 5 top accuracy competitors. Ruben Garcia's electronic pad was laid out for this tiebreaker (no fischets needed); Bill Price recorded a

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0.01 strike - and the competition was over. Jimmy Godwin presented colorful trophies, to 5th place, and other prizes, donated by many parachuting manufacturers, and others in the industry, were awarded to the competitors.

And then - the fun jumpin' was on again, fast and furious, until the day ended with a slot-perfect POPS 12-way falling smoothly through the warm skies with a background of one of those beautiful Florida sunsets.

Final Results: Over 1500 jumps during the week of the meet.

ACCURACY: 1st: Bill Price; 2nd: Al Gramando; 3rd: Artie Perkins; 4th: David Clark; 5th: Dave DeWolf

HIT'N'ROCK: 1st: Gene Bland, 4.71 seconds; 2nd: Bill Hector, 5.53; 3rd: Ruben Garcia, 6.05; 4th: Bob Dean, 6.06; 5th: Pat Moorehead, 6.17.