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South Carolina Aeronautics Commission

Aviation Newsletter

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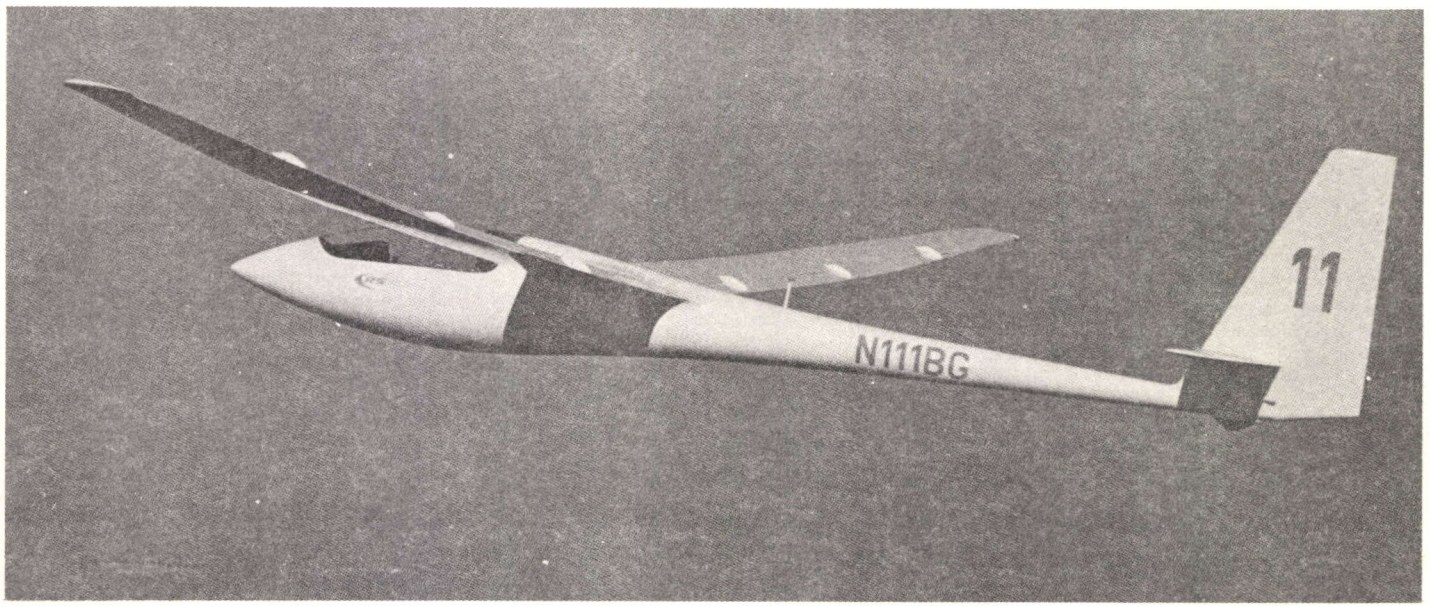
REGION FIVE SOARING MEET



BEN GREEN IN HIS AS-W 17 SAILPLANE photo: Gren Seibels

Chester, S.C.--A record turnout of pilots and sailplanes participated in the Region Five Soaring Championships during the April 15-20 contest. Sixty - six competition sailplanes (more than a million dollars' worth of equipment) were airborne on the first dsy's task.

Marginal weather permitted only three days of flying, but this was enough to produce champions in both classes: Ben Green of Elizabethtown, NC, 1974 National Soaring Champion, once again dominated the Open Class at Chester aboard his huge AS-W 17 sailplane. Runner-up among the big machines was Dick Butler of Tullahoma, Tennessee, Gren Seibels of Columbia came in sixth aboard his 50-foot wingspan Libelle.

A Florida pilot, John Byrd of Delray Beach, won the Standard Class honors against a field of nearly 50 competitors. Ed Sessions of College Park, Georgia, was second, Byrd is a schoolteacher, Sessions an Eastern Air Lines captain.

The contest roster included pilots from points as distant as Vermont, Texas, Minnesota, Indiana, and one from Ecuador, South America. During the seven consecutive years of its staging at Chester Municipal Airport, the Region Five Championships has gained national recognition in soaring circles as the largest and most challenging of the many Regionals held around the country each year. Winning at Chester is almost tantamount to a National Championship.

This year's races included an out-and-return with Rockingham - Hamlet, N.C., as a turnpoint; a speed triangle around Pageland, S.C., and Monroe, N.C., and another out-and-return to Lincolnton, N.C., with