

THE KING'S CUP RACE



THE LAST ROUND-UP: Machines lined up for the start of the Final. (Flight Photo.)

WITH the ceiling down to six or eight hundred feet, and with general visibility such that the wireless masts towards St. Albans were only just in view, it seemed that a third handicapper had stepped in for Friday's eliminating rounds. After weeks of perfect weather, the Air Ministry prophesied even worse things later in the day.

At eight o'clock, when the first man was due to start, reports were still awaited, and the officials were in conclave; while the pilots stood about and engines were run up in a desultory manner. At nine o'clock Selby-Lowndes was out again "looking at things." Apparently conditions were genuinely embarrassing over the higher ground, with clouds sitting solidly on the hill-tops. Bad for everybody, but definitely dangerous for the really fast men.

Then, quite suddenly, at nine-twenty-five, Number One's engine was started and Mr. George Reynolds prepared his little red flag. Five minutes later the first heat had started, and the weather seemed to be clearing ever so slightly. Interest centred on the first of the low-wing cantilevers in the race—the faired-in Comper "Mouse" with its diminutive cream and blue wings—and at 10 o'clock, after a long run, it was off and the wheels "wound in" almost immediately. Cook's Gipsy Swift was a trifle heart-stopping as the machine reached a slight hollow on the aerodrome just as it was air-borne.

Winner: Flt. Lt. H. M. Schofield, on Monospar "S.T.10" (Two Pobjoy 90 h.p. "Niagara"). Speed 134.16 m.p.h.
Second: Mr. Thomas Rose, on Miles "Hawk" (120 h.p. "Gipsy III"). Speed 147.78 m.p.h.
Third, and Winner of Siddeley Trophy: Mr. L. Lipton on D.H. "Moth" (120 h.p. "Gipsy III"). Speed 124.18 m.p.h.

But there was real excitement as the third heat was being flagged away. Not only was the first heat due in and Prince George's Mew Gull ready on the line, but the heavens burst and those unwise spectators without overcoats heartily abjured the low wing tendency. Who could shelter beneath the wings of the Comper "Streak"? Even the "Gulls" made uncomfortable protection.

However, cloudburst or no cloudburst, the Mew Gull bounced across the aerodrome from scratch with spray streaming from its "shorts and spats," as one spectator so aptly termed them. Nobody envied Percival, and few imagined that in such appalling conditions he could average more than the 200 m.p.h. necessary to catch Flt.-Lt. David's Blackburn Trainer.

W. H. Sutcliffe had averaged 139 m.p.h. to win the first heat in Lord Nuffield's Tomtit (Wolseley A.R.9), with G. E. Lowdell (Tomtit) and G. R. de Havilland ("T.K.") fighting it out for second place, and with Cook's "Gipsy Swift" fourth. The latter had averaged 163 m.p.h.! But where was the third of Lord Nuffield's entries? Aga had been reported as down near Reading with petrol shortage—it transpired that the trouble was due to "stoppage" rather than to shortage, and that Aga had put down in a field and damaged his "Moth" against a tree while dodging cows. Presently Number Six drifted slowly over the line at half throttle. Wing-Comdr. Woodhouse had



WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO TURN UP: Many of the spectators saw the race from their cars. (Flight Photo.)