

Pilotreport : Worldrecord O/R 1500 km Speed and up to 3 declared TP  
13.12.2009

Several days in advance our different weather resources showed good wave conditions for Sunday. After a short flight on Saturday everything was prepared for an early start next morning. Wakeup at 3:20 am, drive to the airfield 4:10. We find our gliders in the wind shadow of the airport building a little bit wet. At 5:35 we are ready for take off at the very end of the long runway from Chapelco Airport. Jürgen starts before us with the ASH 25 and is soon out of view in the grey morning sky nearly half an hour before sunrise. At 5:40 it's our turn, here we go. 15 min. later we can stop the motor in a huge wave on our usual lift in the lee of Chapelco mountain. More than 6 m/s accelerates our departure to the startpoint some 60 km south of Chapelco. At 6:14 we are on the way to the Laguna Diamante southeast of Mendoza. The alignments of large and grey rotor banks makes us very fast on the usual run of Loncopue-Valley. Ezeiza Control has not too much traffic and time to open our flight plan submitted the day before. First obstacle in a very fast flight appears north of Domuyo. There is still a lot of humidity in the altitude and we are swimming between Lentis and the high ground of Barrancas valley. A small gap between the all present grey and we are in the much dryer Rio Grande-Valley. Mendoza Control arranges a clearance to FL 230 and soon we can see a wonderful Lenticularis above Laguna Diamante near our TP. Average at the turnpoint 206 km/h, wow. The run to the south can go on. Today the Lennis in the lee of the mighty mountains west of Malargue are quite low, which is very comfortable. The usual band to the north of Tromen volcano and soon we are in the best wave of the known Andes, the famous Cordillera de Viento. More than 8 m/s allows to fly on VNE and to climb fast at the same time. Even it's a little bit dryer, the wave in Loncopue valley is still strong. We reach the finish point of the 1500 km O/R with an average of 198,31 km/h, but now our view is the 3 declared TP-Distance. Only 500 km to the next TP north of Domuyo, easy...

But Domuyo this time has a kind of snow shower, only turbulent air in 5900 m, let's see how the TP is to reach. Good luck, in dry air we find a modest 2 m-lift which we enjoy once again after the TP and allows us to cross directly the high ground east of Domuyo to C. de Viento. Even with these much dryer conditions the lift of his mighty wave generator is there.

Loncopue-valley has only very small rotor puffs, but from the other glider-pilot's we hear that around Chapelco it's raining and there are nearly no more foehn gaps opened.

No problem for us, we do not need to land in San Martin, our last leg is open..

But anyway, we can feel now the change to a southern component well announced in the forecast. Quite fare from Chapelco mountain after a long glide we find strange turbulent lifts in SW-orientated wave patterns. The form of the clouds speaks about breaking waves. We need a lot of time to go 100 km south of Chapelco and there is no way to reach the altitude we need for a valid finish point. Looking to the south we can see some lennies much higher, but Bariloche reports 40 kt on the ground and with our poor 3400 m I don't want to cross the huge hole in the Cordillere which represents the big lake of Nahuel Huapi. Back to Chapelco we find a better wave and finally we can climb the 600 m we need to finish our performance with a new distance record of 2511,1 km. Diethers bet for three bottles of Champagne in case we will fly more than 2500 km has been won, wow once again. It was really tricky...A last concentration to land our dreamship in the strong canalized and gusty windfield of our airport. Christoph is as happy as me, great feelings....

Klaus Ohlmann