

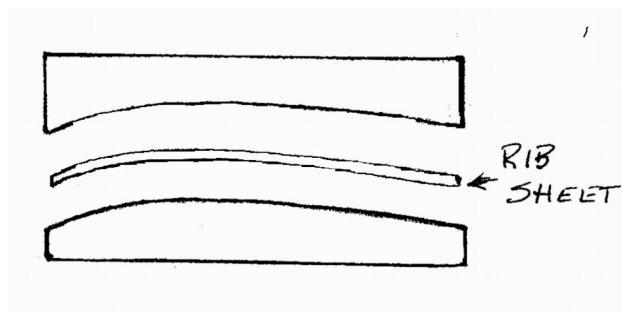
# MAKING SLICED RIBS

By George White

In reading a recent issue of Radio Control Microflight (I know, it's heresy for a free flight guy to be doing that), I ran across an article by Larry Park pertaining to a micro RC job. What grabbed my attention was his method of making sliced ribs, which enabled him to have thinner and lighter ribs which retain the strength of thicker ones by avoiding the cross-grain problem. He makes a bending form using a 4 inch long balsa or other wood block which is 2 inches thick, and as wide as you desire. Then, draw the airfoil shape on the side of the block. You want to cut the block as accurately as you can along the airfoil shape line. To keep the saw from wandering, take an Exacto knife and carefully cut a line about 1/8" deep along the exact airfoil shape for the saw to follow. This will permit you to better control the saw — essential inasmuch as you will use both sides of the cut line to form the ribs.

Cut a sheet of good light balsa at least an inch longer than the cord of the wing, and no wider than the block. You'll need a travel iron, or if your wife is exceptionally understanding, her iron — a covering iron may not have enough surface.

Lay the balsa on the bottom form and put a damp towel on top, then set the iron to "steam" and run the heel of the iron across the sheet. When you pick it up, it will spring back part way. Then place it on the top half of the form, again cover with a damp towel and iron the bottom of the rib sheet. Then remove the towel and dry iron the sheet into the top surface — it will retain the shape of the airfoil.



Then, sandwich the sheet between the two halves of the form, with the desired rib width extruding to one side. Using a fine tooth hobby saw, slice the ribs one at a time. You can then glue a straight piece under each rib to form the rib bottom either before or after you set the spar in place.