



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **66th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett lifts off this Saturday from Albuquerque, USA**

Albuquerque, USA, 4 October 2023 – **The 66th edition of the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, also known as the FAI World Long Distance Gas Balloon Championship, will commence this Saturday from Albuquerque, USA. A total of 17 gas balloons will take flight at 6pm MDT on 7 October (1am UTC on Sunday 8 October). The competition will be hosted by the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.**

With a **rich history spanning over a century**, the Gordon Bennett race stands as the foremost distance competition for gas balloons. It attracts highly skilled and renowned pilot teams from all over the world.

**The team that covers the greatest distance from their starting point is declared the winner.** While achieving success in this race may seem straightforward in theory, it is by no means an easy feat to accomplish. Indeed, victory can only be secured through exceptional physical endurance, mental resilience, unwavering morale and extensive knowledge of wind patterns and weather conditions. Pilots face extreme temperatures, fatigue and dehydration in their tough quest for the longest distance flight.

Each participating team comprises **two pilots who are supported by their dedicated ground crew.** This year, France, Germany and USA have fielded three teams each - the maximum number allowed - while Austria and Poland each have two teams representing them. Lithuania, Spain Switzerland and United Kingdom have all pinned their hopes on one team to compete in this prestigious event.

Germany's **Wilhelm and Benjamin Eimers**, a father-son duo, were the victorious team in last year's competition and are undoubtedly the pair to watch. Wilhelm Eimers has an impressive track record as a pilot in the race, having participated a record 29 times. Not only is he highly experienced, but he is also one of the most accomplished with five victories under his belt.

The race itself pays homage to **James Gordon Bennett Jr.**, renowned for both establishing the International Herald Tribune and his generous sponsorship of air sports. Seeking assistance from the FAI, Bennett duly received air sports expertise in organising the first-ever Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett. This historic event took place on 30 September **1906** from Paris' Tuileries Gardens. Given its great success, Bennett entrusted future iterations of the race to FAI while he continued lending his name to this esteemed trophy.

Throughout the extensive history of the race, truly remarkable accomplishments have been achieved, both in terms of duration and distance. At the 2005 Gordon Bennett event in Albuquerque, Bob Berben and Benoit Simeons from Belgium surpassed the distance record set back in 1912 with an impressive flight covering a total of **3400.39 km**. In a stunning display of endurance, Wilhelm Eimers and Bernd Landsmann soared through the sky for an astonishing **92 hours and 11 minutes** to secure their victory in the competition - a feat that took longer than completing the first ever Pacific crossing! **Typically, Gordon Bennett teams remain airborne for approximately 50 to 65 hours.**

## Editor's Notes

- Livetracking: <https://live.gordonbennett.aero>
  - Website: [www.gordonbennett.aero](http://www.gordonbennett.aero)
  - Facebook: [www.facebook.com/Course.Gordon.Bennett](https://www.facebook.com/Course.Gordon.Bennett)
  - Instagram: [www.instagram.com/CoupeAeroGordonBennett](https://www.instagram.com/CoupeAeroGordonBennett)
  - X: [https://twitter.com/gb\\_fai](https://twitter.com/gb_fai)
  - Youtube (Gordon Bennett TV): [www.youtube.com/c/gordonbennettv](http://www.youtube.com/c/gordonbennettv)
    - Morning teaser: 06:15 MDT, 12:15 UTC, 14:15 CET
    - Morning show (non-competition days/competition days): 9:00/9:30 MDT, 15:00/15:30 UTC, 17:00/17:30 CET
    - Main update: 13:00 MDT, 19:00 UTC, 21:00 CET
    - Late show: 20:00 MDT, 02:00 UTC, 04:00 CET
  - Pictures: <https://bit.ly/gordonbennettpictures>
  - Legends & history: <https://legends.gordonbennett.aero/>
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- FAI logo: [bit.ly/FAI\\_logo](http://bit.ly/FAI_logo)
  - FAI media corner: [www.fai.org/media](http://www.fai.org/media)

## About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation, is the world governing body for air sports and for certifying world aviation and space records. The FAI was founded in 1905 and is a non-governmental and non-profit-making organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

FAI activities include Aerobatics, Aeromodelling, Airships, Amateur-Built and Experimental Aircraft, Balloons, Drones, Gliding, Hang Gliding, Helicopters, Manpowered Flying, Microlights, Parachuting, Paragliding, Paramotors, Power Flying and all other Aeronautic activities and Space records.

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