



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Poland 2 navigates to success and wins 62nd Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett

Lausanne, Switzerland, 1st October 2018 – **A Polish team has flown their gas balloon 1145.29km from Bern, Switzerland, without touching down, achieving the furthest distance from take-off and winning the 2018 Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett.**

The Poland 2 crew - Mateusz REKAS and Jacek BOGADANSKI, both regulars in the legendary balloon race – combined years of flying experience to use the weather systems to take a course across Germany and into their home nation, flying for 2 days and 10 hours in total.

It was a thrilling race, with the meteorological conditions offering three different options to the teams' navigators, with the balloons dispersing across Europe.

The twenty gas balloons took off on Friday 28th September, but only the German 1 team flew in the same north-easterly direction as the Polish winners, after originally starting in the opposite direction. Flying for the longest time in this year's competition (2 days 18hrs), the audiences in Bern and following the live tracking watched with baited breath as the crew made it to fifth, then fourth and finally third place after travelling 840km.

The team that achieved second place plotted a rather different track and followed a south-easterly direction to land in Salerno, Italy, 916km from Bern. A number of other teams took a third approach and followed a south-westerly flow to land in France.

Markus Haggene, Event Director summed up the thoughts of those following the race: "Everyone in the Gordon Bennett HQ has never seen three such different strategies. It's meteorological skills and pilot skills at their best. Congratulations to all the pilots."

The teams will all make their way back to Bern for the prize-giving ceremony, which will take place on Saturday 6 October when the Poland 2 team will return to Bern to collect their trophies and enjoy a gala dinner in celebration of their success.

Final Ranking

1. POL 2, 1145.29km, 2d 10h 28m
2. USA 2, 916.73km, 2d 8h 20m
3. GER 1, 840.59km, 2d 18h 27m

Editor's notes

Competition website: <https://www.gordonbennett.aero/en>

Full results: http://bit.ly/gb2018_results

Live-tracking: <https://live.gordonbennett.aero/>

Pictures in high resolution (free for editorial use): <http://bit.ly/GB2018pics>

Note: the pictures of the upcoming prize-giving ceremony on Saturday will be available at the same link

Competition Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Course.Gordon.Bennett>

General information about the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett: www.fai.org/gordonbennett
About the Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett

The Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett (www.gordonbennett.aero), the FAI World Long Distance Gas Balloon Championship, is the oldest and most prestigious event in aviation and the ultimate challenge for the pilots.

The world's best gas balloonists compete on a simple principle: each team launches from the same location with the same quantity of gas. The competitors launch to their national anthem at intervals of a few minutes and up to three teams per country can take part.

The team whose balloon lands furthest from the starting point after an average of 3-4 days of uninterrupted flight wins.

The first edition of the balloon competition, launched in 1906, was held in front of 200,000 spectators at the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris.

Today, the Gordon Bennett Cup benefits greatly from technology, as a wide audience can access the position, altitude and speed of all participating balloons in near real time. As a result, the Gordon Bennett fan community has grown rapidly. In 2016, the Cup was followed in 152,000 web sessions. Since then, the media presence has also been strongly increasing. In 2017, Gordon Bennett appeared on TV channels in 580 hours and 13,000 news reports in 50 countries.

About FAI

FAI, the World Air Sports Federation (www.fai.org), 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 and Astronautic sporting activities.

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