



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett: Gas balloons to take off this Friday from Germany

Münster, Germany, 11 September 2024 – **Twenty-one gas balloons will fly up, up, and away into the skies above Münster, in northeast Germany, this Friday 13 September. The two-person teams on board the balloons competing in the 67th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett have just one mission: to fly as far as possible from the launch site.**

Participating in the race is not only about competing for the World Champion title, but also about taking part in an **adventure rooted deep in the history of aviation**. Beyond the technology available to help the teams and the ground crews today, ultimately the essence of the race lies in their **skill, courage, stamina, and luck**.

Among the 21 teams in 2024 are **reigning champions, Eric Decellières and Benoit Havret from France**, no doubt hoping to win again this year.

Legendary pilot **Wilhelm Eimers will once again take to the skies with his son, Benjamin Eimers**. Together, they are strong contenders in the race: Wilhelm is the most experienced pilot participating, with 31 entries, including this year. He has claimed victory five times, most recently in 2022 alongside Benjamin. Wilhelm also holds an FAI World Duration Record, set in 1995, when he flew non-stop for over 92 hours.

The USA has three teams, as have Germany and France. Two Polish balloons will join the throng, alongside a Spanish team, an Australian team and balloons from Austria, Lithuania the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, plus the **all-female team from Great Britain**.

The winning team of the prestigious gas balloon race **host the competition two years after their win**. Wilhelm and Benjamin Eimers won the race in 2022, so Germany is the host nation for 2024. This will be the eighth time that Germany has hosted this prestigious ballooning event.

North, south, east or west, nobody knows yet where they will land. In collaboration with ground crews, the teams will endeavour to use the meteorological activity to navigate within the defined competition area to reach the furthest distance from Münster. Due to the Russia-Ukrainian conflict, the teams have a border to the East which they will not be able to cross.

Newspaper tycoon James Gordon Bennett Jr. founded the International Herald Tribune and was a devotee of air sports, renowned for his generous sponsorship. With assistance from the FAI, Bennett organised the **first-ever Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett in 1906** from Paris' Tuileries Gardens. A great success with 200,000 attendees, the FAI continued to uphold the annual race, with the trophy awarded in Gordon Bennett's name. The event is also referred to as the FAI World Long Distance Gas Balloon Championship.

Competition schedule

- 12 September: Check in, Opening Ceremony, filling of sandbags
- 13 September: Briefing, inflation, launch
- 13-16 September: Daily livestream and interviews on Gordon Bennett TV
- 20 September: Welcome Back party
- 21 September: Awards Ceremony

Editor's note

- [Livetracking \(from Friday\)](#)
- [Event Website](#)
- [GB Facebook](#)
- [GB Instagram](#)
- [GB X](#)
- [Pictures of past editions](#)
- [Youtube \(Gordon Bennett TV\)](#)
 - Morning show: 10:00 CET
 - Afternoon show: 17:00 CET
 - Late show: 20:30 CET
- TV distribution via [Quattromedia](#):
 - Within 12h after launch: Online Clip #1, incl. press release
 - Within 12-24h after last balloon lands: Online Clip #2 with winners, incl. press release
 - Within 12-24h after last balloon lands: TV News with interviews

- [FAI logo](#)
- [FAI media corner](#)

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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