

66th Gordon Bennett Cup Distance Competition

October 11, 2023, 7:00am Update: Last two balloons fight to stay aloft as they approach the North Carolina coast

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Albuquerque, NM – The 66th Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, sponsored by BayoTech, is in its fourth day of competition. As of 7:00am MDT update from the Command Center, only two balloons remain in flight. The remaining teams, Germany 1 (GER-1) and France 2 (FRA-2), have surpassed all other teams in distance, and are now trying to outlast each other in the air before they touch down on the North Carolina Coast. It is likely that whoever lands first will take 2nd place. The teams are currently flying south of Fayetteville, NC.

Fayetteville is only 94 miles from the coast, and with east winds in play, the gas balloon teams are limited in how much further they can fly. The two final teams will likely fly right to the beach. Wilhelm Eimers of Germany 1 (GER-1) has flown in more Gordon Bennett races than any balloonist in history (this will be his 30th) and has won five times. He has more than 9,000 flight hours and holds multiple records, including the Gordon Bennett duration record of more than 92 hours aloft. Co-pilot Benjamin Eimers is this year's recipient of the Diplome Montgolfier, ballooning's highest award.

Eric Decellieres and Benoit Havret, of France 2 (FRA-2), finished second in the 2021 Gordon Bennett, and Decellieres and Benoit Havret have two top five Gordon Bennett races and four top tens to their credit. They are known as tough, gutsy competitors.

Both teams have travelled more than 2400 km (1491.3 miles) so far, but they won't be able to fly much further. Race will be over in the next hour or two, so stay tuned for updates.

Team Updates (7:00am MDT 10/11/2023):

Team #	Position	Country	Distance (km)	Distance (miles)	Landed?
FRA-2	1	France	2522.04	1567.12	
GER-1	2	Germany	2483.37	1543.09	
FRA-1	3	France	2359.95	1466.40	Landed
USA-1	4	USA	2224.62	1382.31	Landed
USA-2	5	USA	1947.68	1210.23	Landed
ESP-1	6	Spain	1727.17	1073.21	Landed
GER-2	7	Germany	1648.86	1024.55	Landed
AUT-2	8	Austria	1496.42	929.83	Landed
USA-3	9	USA	1461.6	908.20	Landed
AUT-1	10	Austria	1165.42	724.16	Landed
GBR-1	11	United Kingdom	1091.89	678.47	Landed
POL-1	12	Poland	978.02	607.71	Landed
POL-2	13	Poland	872.48	542.13	Landed

GER-3	14	Germany	494.20	307.08	Landed
LTU-1	15	Lithuania	395.76	245.91	Landed
SUI-1	16	Switzerland	293.33	182.27	Landed
FRA-3	n/a	France	n/a	n/a	No start

For the most up-to-date information and to track the balloons in real-time, please visit the official Gordon Bennett Cup website at <https://balloonfiesta.com/Gordon-Bennett-2023> and our dedicated tracking site at <https://live.gordonbennett.aero>. Don't forget to tune in to [Gordon Bennett TV](#) for exclusive coverage and insights.

The next update will be provided at conclusion of the distance competition.

About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta & Gordon Bennett Cup

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil, is the host for the 66th Gordon Bennett Cup. The Balloon Fiesta is a festival of hot air balloons that takes place in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website www.balloonfiesta.com and follow us on Twitter [@BalloonFiesta](#) and Facebook