

2019 America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race

Team Bio

Team number: 4

Crew Nationality: USA

Balloon Name: *Across the Universe*

Balloon Registration: N6395V

Pilots:

Name	Noah Forden	Name	Bert Padelt
Hometown	Newport, RI	Hometown	Barto, PA
Occupation	Mechanical engineer, works for the U.S. Navy	Occupation	Owner, Best Aviation Services, with wife Joanie operates a full-time hot air and gas balloon repair station, manufactures hot air and gas balloons
Aircraft ratings/flight hours	Rated in hot air and gas balloons and in airplanes with more than 1,000 fixed-wing hours and 500 hours in hot air balloons	Aircraft ratings/flight hours	Involved in ballooning since 1972 and is rated in hot air and gas balloons.
America's Challenge race history	Competed twice (2016, 2017) with Bert Padelt, Best finish: 3 rd (2016).	America's Challenge history	16 (1995-98, 2000-02, 2004-07, 2009-11, 2013, 2016-2017); Best finish: 2 nd (2002)
Gordon Bennett history	None.	Gordon Bennett history	2 (2003 and 2008)
Other notable flights/records	In college, designed and built radio controlled balloons; designed the balloon "Cosmos" which broke Malcolm Forbes trans-American hot air balloon record. Has been rated in hot air balloons for more than 25 years and participated in a number of Balloon Fiestas. Formerly a balloon repairman who worked for the Stumpf repair station. Member of the Aero Club of America North Carolina chapter. Noah is currently the secretary of the BFA Gas Division Board of Directors.	Other notable flights/records	Designed and built Two Eagles, the gigantic (350,000 cu. ft.) balloon envelope used by Troy Bradley and Leonid Tiukhtyaev during their record-setting flight across the Pacific. Was the systems director for Steve Fossett's round-the-world attempts including the successful 2002 solo round-the world flight. Padelt-built balloons hold the world distance and duration records for 1000-meter straight gas balloons as well as the absolute world gas balloon distance and duration records set by Two Eagles.
Awards:	FAI Group Diploma for contributions to the sport of gas ballooning.	Awards:	Montgolfier Diplome (2010) Balloon Federation of America Gas Division Tony Fairbanks Award, Shields-Trauger Award (with wife Joanie), which is the BFA's premier award. FAI Group Diploma for contributions to the sport of gas ballooning.

Comments: Bert Padelt is one of the world's major manufacturers of gas balloons and is responsible for building many of the balloons that have competed over the years in the America's Challenge. Most recently, Bert has been instrumental in the development of American-built hydrogen balloon systems; there is growing interest in Padelt systems among European pilots who have seen American teams fly them in the Gordon Bennett. In addition to 1,000 meter competition balloons, Padelt builds a smaller hydrogen system designed for shorter-distance flights. The first of these small, relatively economical systems is owned and operated by the North Carolina chapter of the Aero Club of America (it made a brief demonstration flight here in Albuquerque during the 2014 America's Challenge). Many see this as the future of gas ballooning in the U.S. and a means to involve more people in the sport.

Noah has a distinguished record in both balloons and airplanes, but is relatively new to gas ballooning. He got his gas balloon rating in February 2016 through the Aero Club of America's program, and later that year flew in his first America's Challenge with Bert Padelt as a last-minute replacement. He so enjoyed the experience that he bought a larger gas balloon and is well on his way to being a leader in the gas ballooning community.