

66th Gordon Bennett Cup Distance Competition

October 10, 2023, 9:00pm Update: After an action-packed afternoon, the finish line is in sight

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Albuquerque, NM – The 66th Coupe Aéronautique Gordon Bennett, sponsored by BayoTech, is in its third day of competition. As of 9:00pm 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 to fly about 200km (124 miles) to overtake the leading distance set by team France-1 earlier today.

Kim Vesely, experienced balloonist and race analyst from the Gordon Bennett Media Team, offers the following statement as a recap of the day and insights about what might happen next:

Team France 1, Benoît Pelard and Benoît Peterle, landed with the lead near Savannah, GA at about 5 PM local time on the U.S. east coast. They led the race for most of Monday and all of Tuesday and were running out of daylight and dry land. They travelled 2369 km (about 1,466 miles) in approximately 66 hours. Their landing site is only about 60 km from the Atlantic coastline.”

Team USA-1, Noah Forden and Brenda Cowlshaw, spent much of their flight locked in an often-spirited dual with France 1, often with just a few kilometers separating them in distance. They landed about 30 minutes before near Dublin, GA, after traveling about 2225 km (1,382 miles) in about 65 hours.

Team USA-2, Barbara Fricke and Peter Cuneo, landed in third place about 5:30 this afternoon eastern time at Troy, GA, having flown 1948 km (1,210 miles) in about 64 hours.

The two trailing teams have also now landed. Germany 2, Benedict Munz and Matthias Schlegel, landed at around 3:30 PM central US time south of Tupelo, MS. Their flight of approximately 1,659 km took them more than 1,000 miles. Austria 2, Christian Wagner and Stefanie Liller, landed just before 4 PM central US time after a flight of 1,496 km (about 930 miles).

This now sets up the end game of the race. Pelard and Peterle flew as far as they could and, in landing, essentially threw down the gauntlet to the teams following them – beat this if you can! The two teams still flying are trying to do just that. Germany 1, Wilhelm Eimers and Benjamin Eimers, and France 2, Eric Decellieres and Benoit Havret, have been locked in a duel of their own, just a few kilometers apart. Both teams have travelled more than 2000 km (1,242 miles) and are gaining distance on the leaders. They are still about 200 km behind, and since it is dark on the east coast it appears they may be able to fly through the night (their fourth night aloft). If they are able to overtake France 1, the outcome of the race may well come down to who lands first. In many distance gas balloon races, teams land with the lead, only to be overtaken by their pursuer. Both teams, GER-1 and FRA-2, know the feeling – they have been

both been edged out of Gordon Bennett victories by just a few kilometers. It could be a thrilling conclusion to a great race.

Team Updates (9:00pm MDT 10/10/2023):

Team #	Position	Country	Distance (km)	Distance (miles)	Landed?
FRA-1	1	France	2359.95	1466.40	Landed
USA-1	2	USA	2224.62	1382.31	Landed
FRA-2	3	France	2150.83	1336.46	
GER-1	4	Germany	2122.39	1318.79	
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	9	Austria	1496.42	929.83	Landed
USA-3	7	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 7:00am MDT 10/11/2023.

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.