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Bendix Air Races Collection - 1932 National Air Races (Cleveland), Official Program, August 27 to September 5, 1932

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The National Air Races Serve Aeronautic Development
By SENATOR HIRAM BINGHAM
President, The National Aeronautic Association

FOR twelve eventful years the National Air Races have performed important service in the development of aeronautics in this country. By the keenly competitive atmosphere of these annual gatherings, pilots, manufacturers and aircraft engineers have been encouraged to greater accomplishment. Since this inception public interest has increased until today hundreds of thousands of persons attend these races while many millions more follow them by means of radio, motion pictures and the press.

Although many of the annual events held during this twelve-year period have been outstanding, I do not believe that any has brought greater progress than is shown in the races of this year. Testimony to this is given in the many specially designed racing craft which are participating for the first time. These new type planes are sure to have an important effect upon the future design of standard aircraft. They point, moreover, to a new era in national aeronautic competition where racing will center around free-for-all events for speed ships of advanced design and where fame and fortune will depend even more surely than in the past on improved performance and higher maximum speed.

This year witnesses also the inauguration of new and important trophy competitions and even greater interest in the Bendix Transcontinental Speed Dash, the great Handicap Derbies from the East and West Coasts, and the Thompson and Aerol closed course landplane speed classics.

Much credit is due to the National Air Race staff for this fine showing and particularly is credit due the Cleveland sponsors of the project which calls for conducting this annual aeronautic competition at the Cleveland Airport for a five-year period. They have shown great initiative and courage by carrying on in such splendid fashion during a difficult period. The establishment of a continuing race organization unquestionably accelerated the construction of special racing craft and crystallized the establishment of additional trophy races serving important phases of development.

The National Aeronautic Association takes special pride in the growth of this annual air sports classic since the origin and development of these races was due largely to the activity of N.A.A. members and N.A.A. Chapter groups and since each year this great sporting event is conducted under sanction of the Association as the representative in the United States of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale.

This international governing body for air sport was formed in 1905, but two short years after the Wight brothers' first flight at Kitty Hawk, in recognition of the important part that competitions and trials for record performances were to play in the development of aviation and the need for a competent and authoritative sport-governing body.

Today, the F.A.I. has member organizations in thirty-three nations of the world: Germany, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada [Canada], Denmark, Egypt, Spain, United States, Finland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Mexico, Norway, Netherlands, Poland Portugal, Roumania, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria and Lebanon, Turkey, Czechoslovakia and Uruguay.

As the representative of the F.A.I. in the United States, the National Aeronautic Association since its organization in 1922 has acted as the supervisory body for sporting aviation in this country and has endeavored to guide and encourage all phases of competitive flying. In addition to the sanctioning of air races, the Association supervises trials for American and international records and homologates as official those performances establishing new marks.

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Since this sporting activity is but one part of the Association's work in the advancement of aviation in the United States, the active guidance and control of this phase of flying throughout the country is centered in its Council Committee, in which representative individuals are appointed each year. Since 1926 Charles Wright, the world's first pilot, has been chairman of this steering group.

This group interprets the international sporting rules, formulates special regulations for new sporting competitions, issues licenses to pilots in legal sports standing. Submits the development of sound aeronautic competitions, issues official sanction for air races and record trials, maintains in its course headquarters in Washington registered institutions for the accurate recording of record performances, keeps an official listing of record marks, appoints or controls officials persons qualified to serve in the management of races and record trials and otherwise actively serves the best interests of sporting aviation in this country.

The importance of established procedure and proven rules for the conduct of aeronautic competitions is well illustrated in the National Air Races. This great event requires a highly organized system of record management and supervision from the planning of the race program to the payment of prize checks to the winning pilots.

Fortunately the F. A. I. rules for the conduct of racing competitions are the result of a quarter-century of experience under widely varying conditions. These rules protect alike the pilots, manufacturers and the public. They promote soundly functioning of the contest program and insure an equal opportunity to all contestants. Special regulations protect each pilot's winnings by requiring that prize money be placed in escrow before the start of the race. Other regulations insure the competence of each controlling official and protect the public by guarding against dangerous flying and the injury of outside parties.

Since air racing is so far the sporting sport, extremely accurate and rapid timing is required. To make widespread timing at the National Air Races and thus avoid any possibility of prize money going to the wrong pilot due to timing inaccuracies, the Council Committee of the N. A. A. has developed an extremely fine and accurate timing system which records electrically the exact flight of racing planes to the remarkable accuracy of 1/100 of a second.

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Since air racing is by far the speediest sport, extremely accurate and rapid timing is required. To enable split-second timing at the National Air Races and thus avoid any possibility of prize money going to the wrong pilot due to timing inaccuracies, the Contest Committee of the N.A.A. had developed an extremely fast and accurate timing system which records electrically the swift flight of racing planes to the remarkable accuracy of 1/100 of a second.

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