

2003 - 8th America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race

The team of **Richard Abruzzo and Carol Rymer-Davis** (Team #4) are the winners in the Eighth America's Challenge Gas Balloon Race. They landed safely in far northern Wisconsin, about 40 miles SE of Duluth, MN and just short of Lake Superior, about 8:25 AM MDT (1430Z). They had dueled with **Barbara Fricke and Peter Cuneo** (Team #6) for hundreds of miles across the American heartland, sometimes flying less than 20 miles apart. Fricke and Cuneo landed near Hinkley, Minnesota, southwest of Duluth and north of Minneapolis, at almost exactly the same time as their closest competitors. Both of the top two teams were in the air for approximately 63 hours.

This is Richard Abruzzo's fourth America's Challenge victory. Fricke and Cuneo have also previously won the America's Challenge .

The German/American team of **Willie Eimers and Greg Winker** (Team #2) finished third, landing near Waco, Texas late yesterday afternoon. **Mark Sullivan and Cheri White** (Team #13) are the fourth-place winners.

The top three American pilots qualify to compete in next year's Coupe Aeronautique Gordon Bennett, one of the world's premier gas balloon competitions. The Gordon Bennett is traditionally held in the home country of the previous year's winner. A French team won the 2003 Gordon Bennett last month.

Launch: 05-Oct-2003 Albuquerque, NM Latitude: 35°11.715' Longitude 106°35.833'								
Rank	Pilot/ Co-pilot	Country	Distance (KM)	Distance (Statute miles)	Area of landing	Latitude	Longitude	Flight hours (Duration)
1	Abruzzo, Richard / Rymer-Davis, Carol	USA	1787.72	1110.89	Iron River, WI	46°31.186'	91°24.528'	63.23
2	Fricke, Barbara / Cuneo, Peter	USA	1647.20	1023.57	NNE of Mora, MN	45°59.726'	93°10.051'	63.12
3	Eimers, Wilhelm / Winker, Greg	Germany/ USA	934.29	580.57	Bruceville Eddy, TX	31°15.898'	97°16.749'	49.15
4	Sullivan, Mark / White, Cheri	USA	356.58	221.58	Bovine, TX	34°27.134'	102°47.812'	24.90
5	MacNutt, Phillip / Critelli, Brian	USA	330.76	205.53	Clovis, NM	34°21.801'	103°07.194'	21.88
6	Hale, Bruce / Devaney, Mark	USA	322.96	200.69	Broadview, NM	34°40.362'	103°06.719'	24.73
7	Parks, Sam / Cayton, Andy	USA	314.17	195.23	Clovis, NM	34°33.343'	103°14.547'	24.95

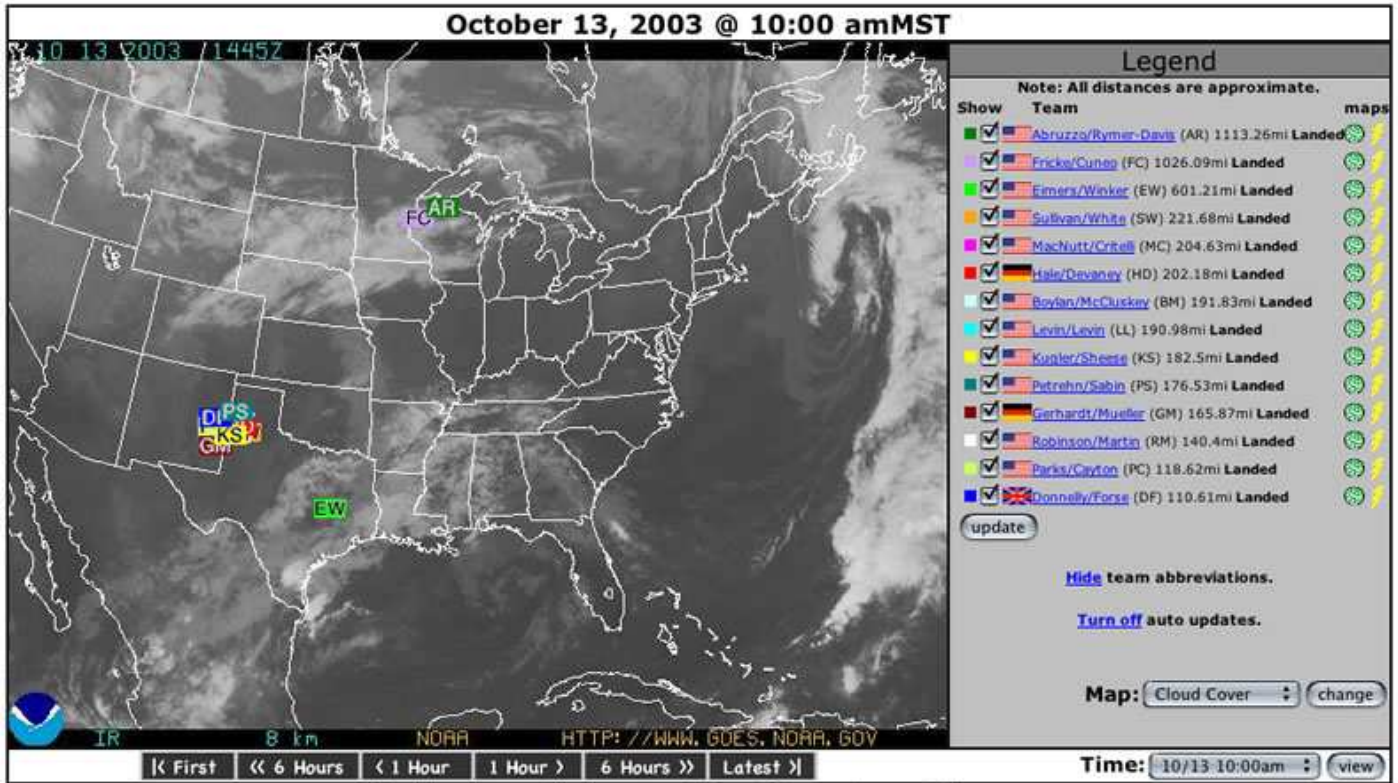
8	Boylan, Thomas / McCluskey, Bob	USA	309.70	192.45	Portales, NM	34?14.194?	103?24.939?	25.80
9	Levin, David / Levin, Alan	USA	304.99	189.52	Grady, NM	34?52.250?	103?16.249?	25.47
10	Kugler, John / Sheeshe, ?Red?	USA	296.20	184.06	Portales, NM	34?08.619?	103?37.273?	20.85
11	Petrehn, Johnny / Sabin, Richard	USA	278.94	173.33	Logan, NM	35?21.834?	103?31.870?	26.63
12	Gerhardt, Astrid / Mueller, Stephan	Germany	273.45	169.92	Roswell, NM	33?32.252?	104?23.781?	17.70
13	Donnelly, Tom / Forse, Simon	UK	177.96	110.59	Santa Rosa, NM	34?53.430?	104?40.686?	25.22
14	Robinson, Shane / Martin, Ron	USA	142.00	88.24	Ft. Sumner, NM	34?05.857?	104?26.886?	13.77

Penalties:

Eimers/Winker: 2% of greatest distance, Rule 7.2 Reporting

Robinson/Martin: 5% of greatest distance, Rule 9.3 Pilot Responsibility

Final Tracking Image:



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