

# A Concise History of Air Racing

By Don Berliner

## Chapter 7 – The Phoenix Arises in the Desert

### Part 1 – 1964

#### The 32<sup>nd</sup> King's Cup Race

Two trophy races at Shoreham on July 18 produced 22 starters for the King's Cup at Coventry on August 1, where they flew four laps of the 18-mile course. The winner, at 185 mph, was Dennis Hartas in the Cosmic Wind "Ballerina", which had been imported from the USA, and was the first non-British airplane to win the Cup. In second was Ron Paine in the Hawk Speed Six at 187.5 mph, and third was a tie between Peter Masefield in a Chipmunk at 144.3 mph and A.J. Spiller in his Cessna 180 at 160.8 mph.

#### The First National Championship Air Races

A solution to what had been feared were fatal problems in American air racing came from a most unlikely source: a hydroplane racing champion in the high desert of western Nevada. Bill Stead created the National Championship Air Races with almost no help from experienced people, and it worked! He took a barren stretch of his own cattle ranch northeast of Reno, Nevada, and turned it into the air racing center of the world.

For 10 days from September 12 through 20, the clear Nevada sky was host to four classes of pylon racing, and a transcontinental race from Florida. The 2,255-mile race from Florida attracted 8 pilots, all in P-51 Mustangs. The winner, at 319 mph, was Wayne Adams. In second, at 308 mph, was Chuck Lyford, and in third, at 277 mph, was C.E. Crosby.

The new Stock Plane Class, for women flying Piper Cherokees, was won by Irene Leverton with a best heat at 143.46 mph. Mary Barr was second at 141.79 mph, and Judy Wagner was third at 136.69 mph. The new Sport Biplane Class race for small homebuilts was swept by Knight Twister pilots. Clyde Parsons won at 144.57 mph. Tom Shannon was second at 143.41 mph, and Jim Nagle was third at 131.50 mph.

In the 190 Cu. In. Class, Bob Porter won in Jim Miller's "Little Gem" at 193.44 mph. Steve Wittman was second in his "Bonzo" at 187.42 mph, and Art Scholl was third in "Miss San Bernardino" at 171.76 mph. All three airplanes dated back to the Goodyear Trophy Races of the late 1940's, while last-place Jerry Quarton flew the first of the new plans-built Cassutt Racers.

The newly-named Unlimited Class attracted 5 pilots in P-51s, and 3 in Grumman F8F Bearcats. Top qualifier was Bob Love in the transcontinental race winner, at 395.46 mph. After a long series of heat races, the winner on points was Mira Slovak in Bill Stead's Bearcat, with a best speed of 355.52 mph. Bob Love was second on points, despite the best speed of 381.96 mph. Clay Lacy, in a P-51, was third with a best of 354.74 mph.

In just a few days, the morale of American air racing people went from rock-bottom to through-the-roof.

## Part 2 – 1965

From one experimental race in 1964, American racing grew to five in 1965. While this growth may have been too fast, since it attracted a couple of highly questionable promoters, there was no desire to slow it. Inactive airplanes were dusted off, others were quickly modified, and the impact of EAA's rapidly expanding amateur-building movement began to show.

### The International Air Races

On March 27-28, a race meet was held at Tampa-St. Petersburg Airport, Florida. It failed to live up to its flamboyant billing, but did bring racing back to the state after 15 years' absence. The Sport Biplane and 190 Cu. in. Classes each drew five entries. In the Biplane group, there were two Pitts Specials, an EAA Biplane, a Knight Twister and a special. The winner, flying a Pitts, was Pat Ledford at 137.7 mph. In second was "Skeeter" Royall in a Pitts at 136.7 mph, and in third was Jack Lowers in his own design, at 126.7 mph.

The midgets were led in time trials by Bob Downey in the Jim Miller "Little Gem" at 197.17 mph, followed by Bob Porter in Miss Cosmic Wind at 187.57 mph, and Bill Falck at 184.42 mph. The Finals, for 12 laps of a 2 ½-mile course, saw the two leading airplanes clocked in exactly the same time, though the finish line judges gave the win to Falck "by a few feet", as he and Downey were timed at 200.75 mph.

### Los Angeles National Air Races

Intended as a copy of the successful races at Reno, this event lacked the solid leadership, organization and financing. Nevertheless, it achieved most of its goals, offering three classes of racing at Fox Field, Lancaster, near Edwards AFB. It began on the weekend of May 29-30, with the Final races postponed until June 6 due to very high winds.

In the Sport Biplane Class, there were four heats and Finals on the 2 ½-mile course. The winner was future aerobatic great Bob Herendeen in a Pitts Special at 126.08 mph. In second, Mike Strboya in a Meyers "Little Toot" at 125.52 mph, and in third, Jack Wells in a Stolp Starduster at 123.56 mph.

There were no time trials for the midgets, so the fastest seven from the heat races went into the Finals. The winner was Bob Downey at 194.66 mph, second was Art Scholl at 191.02 mph, and third was Bud Jury in the Pack "Little A-Go-Go" at 190.64 mph.

Nine Unlimiteds qualified on the 9-mile course, led by Clay Lacy at 381.63 mph and Chuck Lyford at 380.28 mph. In the Finals it was Chuck Lyford winning in the Bardahl Mustang at 390.61 mph. Placing second was Clay Lacy at 370.54 mph, and third, Mira Slovak at 369.64 mph.

## The 33<sup>rd</sup> King's Cup Race

Two elimination rounds led to the King's Cup Race, August 21 at Coventry. It began as two heats for the winners of the preliminary rounds, each for five laps of an eight-mile course. The first six finishers in each went to the finals, for five laps. The winner was John Stewart-Wood in a Cessna 172 at 131.5 mph. Placing second, John Miles in a Chipmunk at 132.5 mph, and third, Louis Dunkerly in a 172 at 130.5 mph.

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Championship Air Races

The 1964 plan worked and so much of it was repeated at Bill Stead's Sky Ranch on September 6 to 12.

Nine pilots started the transcontinental race from Clearwater, Florida, to Reno Municipal Airport, with all but one flying a P-51. The winner was E.D. Weiner at 348.6 mph, followed by Clay Lacy at 342.4 mph and Wayne Adams at 331.4 mph.

The Women's Race was open to a variety of airplanes, but drew only three. Judy Wagner won in her Beech Bonanza at 182.23 mph. In second was Irene Leverton in a Piper Comanche at 166.24 mph. And in third, Nan Giroux in a Cessna 210 at 163.75 mph.

In the Sport Biplane Class, the top qualifier was Bill Boland in a Mong Sport at 152.80 mph, followed by 1964 winner Clyde Parsons at 148.76 mph and Ralph Ormsbee in a Smith Miniplane at 120.81 mph. In the 8-lap Finals, it was Boland first at 148.68 mph, Parsons second at 146.06 mph, and Fred Rechenmacher third in his EAA Biplane at 118.81 mph.

The 190 Cu. In. Class race saw 12 entries, led in time trials by Bill Falck at 205.48 mph, followed by Bob Porter at 203.16 mph and Bob Downey at 195.51 mph. In the Finals, Bob Porter won at 202.14 mph, Falck was second at 196.19 mph, and Downey was third at 194.44 mph.

Time trials for the Unlimited Class went to Darryl Greenamyer in an increasingly modified Bearcat, at 369.70 mph, with Clay Lacy second at 359.10 mph and Chuck Lyford third at 346.57 mph. In the 10-lap, 80-mile Finals, Greenamyer won easily at 375.10 mph, while Lyford was second at 368.57 mph, and Lacy was third at 356.97 mph.

## Las Vegas Inter-National Air Races

Two rival races in the Las Vegas, Nevada, area were scheduled for the weekend of September 24-26. The one at Boulder City was sanctioned by the National Aeronautic Association and thus prevailed, even though it was run by infamous gambler Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder. The physical plant was barely acceptable, having heavy power lines running across the Unlimited course.

The Women's Stock Plane Race was won easily by Judy Wagner at 179.6 mph to Irene Leverton's 155.2 mph.

The 190 Cu. In. Class race attracted 13 entries, with time trials won by John Paul Jones in Shoestring at 207.9 mph, followed by Bill Falck at 207.4 mph and Bob Porter at 203.1 mph. The length of the race course was *estimated* on the basis of reasonable speeds, as the announced length was obviously wrong. In the 12-lap Finals, Porter won at 202.4 mph, Falck was second at 202.2 mph (0.4 seconds slower) and Jones was third at 198.0 mph.

The Unlimited Class race had 11 entries: 3 in Bearcats and 8 in Mustangs. The top qualifier was Darl Greenamyre, whose 423.40 mph broke the record set by Chuck Brown at Cleveland in 1948. The Finals winner was Chuck Lyford (P-51) at 391.62 mph when Greenamyre retired with mechanical problems. In second place was Ben Hall (P-51) at 363.30 mph, and third was Mira Slovak (F8F) at 322.23 mph.

## The International AeroClassic

This event at Palm Springs, California, on November 12-14 was planned as a major aviation industry trade show with competitions for many aviation sports. Despite highly professional organization, it ended up as little more than a 190 Cu. In. Class race supported by some industry displays.

Leading 12 qualifiers was John Paul Jones with 210.28 mph, breaking Jim Miller's 1959 record. In the 12-lap, 30-mile Finals, Jones won at 202.17 mph, Bob Porter was second at 201.64 mph, and Steve Wittman was third at 191.35 mph. A legal battle over post-race inspections kept the prize money tied up for two years.

## Part 3 –1966

### International Aviation Exposition

The second race in the Tampa, Florida, area was at St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport from April 28 to May 1. During practice prior to qualifications, a crash in his newly-acquired "Deerfly" midget racer took the life of Reno Air Races founder Bill Stead.

Four pilots competed in the Sport Biplane Class race, with "Skeeter" Royall winning in his modified Pitts Special at 148.76 mph, to Jack Lowers' 140.68 mph, and Bob Abernathy's 140.38 mph.

In the 190 Cu. In. Class race, time trials were won by Bill Falck, whose 212.77 mph broke the national record. In second was Bob Downey at 195.65 mph, and in third, rookie Nick Jones in his Cassutt Racer at 192.72 mph. FAI speed trials on a 3-km. straight course produced an unofficial world record of 238.695 mph by Falck. The Finals was won by Falck at 203.01 mph. Wittman was second at 196.01 mph, Downey was third at 193.72 mph, and Jones was fourth at 191.46 mph.

## Los Angeles National Air Races

Held May 28-30 at Fox Field, Lancaster, California, this Don Butterfield-promoted race added to his unfortunate reputation for hit-or-miss operations. As examples, time trials proved to be too much for the timing system, and less than half the advertised purse was paid.

In the Sport Biplane race, Bruce McIntyre (Pitts) won at 139.93 mph, Sid White (Starduster) was second at 138.01 mph, and Bill Boland (Mong) was third at 137.65 mph.

The 190 Cu. in Class race appeared to be a win for Ray Cote (Shoestring), but the post-race inspection revealed improper parts in his engine. First thus went to Bob Downey (Little Gem) at 189.48 mph, second to Art Scholl at 187.97 mph, and third to Nick Jones at 185.36 mph.

The featured Unlimited Class race was a P-51 sweep, as E.D. Weiner won at 375.81 mph, Ben Hall was second at 369.29 mph and hydroplane racer Russ Schlee was third at 360.29 mph.

## The 34<sup>th</sup> King's Cup Race

A series of qualifying races produced a starting line-up of 16 airplanes ready to race on August 13 at Coventry. After six laps of the 11-mile course, the winner was John Miles in a Chipmunk at 135 mph, second was Bev Snook in a Jodel DR.1050 at 138 mph, and third was Dennis Hartas in the Cosmic Wind "Ballerina" at 178 mph.

## Washington National Air Races

What could have been the start of a successful series of race at Frederick, Maryland, on September 3-5, was spoiled by Don Butterfield's management and a spectacular mid-air collision. While much of the world saw pictures of one of the worst-*looking* crashes in air racing history, the lack of serious injury to the pilots was down-played.

The Women's race was won by Judy Wagner (Bonanza) at 178.36 mph, second was pre-war racer Edna Gardner Whyte (Aero Commander 200) at 172.72 mph, and third was Pat Arnold (Comanche) at 168.13 mph.

In the Sport Biplane Class, first place was won by Paul Booth (Pitts Special) at 124.28 mph. In second was Jack Lowers (Lowers Special) at 123.32 mph, and third was Clem Fischer (Mong Sport) at 120.00 mph.

The featured 190 cu. In. Class race drew 13 entries. Tied for first in time trials were Steve Wittman and Nick Jones at 194.78 mph. In third was Bill Falck at 193.38 mph. In the 12-lap Final Race, Falck won at 192.76 mph, to 192.38 mph for Bob Downey. The collision at the end of lap 10 overshadowed the competitiveness of the racing.

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Championship Air Races

The Reno races of September 23-25 continued to grow, thanks to the excellent foundation built by the late Bill Stead. Thirty-eight pilots and airplanes filled the spacious ramp and hangars at the new home, the recently deactivated Stead Air Force Base, named for Bill's brother.

In the Sport Biplane Class, time trials were won by Bruce McIntyre in a Pitts Special at 151.26 mph, followed by Bill Boland in a Mong at 151.01 mph, and Sid White in a Starduster at 146.34 mph. Fifteen pilots raced eight different types. In the Finals, the winner was Chuck Wickliffe in the Dollar Special at 147.72 mph, second was White at 144.72 mph, and third was McIntyre at 144.67 mph.

The 190 Cu. In. Class' time trials were won by Ray Cote in Shoestring at 204.55 mph, Bill Falck was second in "Rivets" at 200.00 mph, and Steve Wittman was third in "Bonzo" at 195.25 mph. The Finals went to Falck at 193.10 mph after Cote dropped out with engine trouble. Wittman was second at 191.90 mph, and Bob Downey was third in "Little Gem" at 189.01 mph.

The Unlimited Class continued to be a race between the radial-engined Bearcats and the V-12-powered Mustangs. Darryl Greenamyer, in a Bearcat, qualified first at 409.97 mph, Chuck Lyford was second at 390.08 mph and Ben Hall was third at 378.85 mph, both in Mustangs. In the Finals, for 10 laps of the 8-mile course, Greenamyer beat five Mustang pilots to win at 396.22 mph, with Hall second at 372.70 mph, and Clay Lacy third at 360.63 mph.

## Part 4 – 1967

### Texas National Air Races

Luck Field, near Ft. Worth, was the site of this May 26-28 three-class race meet. In the Women's Class, Judy Wagner led eight qualifiers with a record 192.31 mph. In the Finals, she won at 194.72 mph. Mara Culp was second in an Aero Commander at 187.77 mph, but was dropped to third for cutting a pylon. Elaine Loening was elevated to second at 186.80 mph.

Time trials for the Sport Biplane Class were won by Bruce McIntyre at 136.19 mph, to 135.34 mph for Lee Mahoney in a Starduster, and 131.07 mph for Chuck Wickliffe. In the Finals, it was McIntyre first at 156.17 mph, Mahoney a close second at 155.93 mph, and Wickliffe third at 144.97 mph.

The 190 Cu. In. Class drew 11 entries, with time trials being led by Bob Downey at 200.89 mph, Steve Wittman at 196.94 mph, and Ray Cote at 193.97 mph. In the Finals, Falck was first at 203.97 mph. Wittman would have been a strong second at 203.58 mph, except for a pylon cut. Officially, second was Downey at 200.41 mph.

### The 35<sup>th</sup> King's Cup Race

On August 19 at Tollerton Aerodrome, Nottingham, 17 pilots started the 6-lap race around a 1/2-mile course. The winner, Charles Masefield, flew a P-51D Mustang at 277.5 mph. In second was

John Stewart-Wood in a Cessna 172 mph at 135.5 mph, and third was Rex Nicholls in a Chipmunk at 137.75 mph.

## The Cleveland National Air Races

The sport returned to its ancestral home on September 2-4 after an absence of 17 years. The site was Burke Lakefront Airport in downtown Cleveland, as the municipal airport had become too busy. It was to be promoter Butterfield's last stand; he would quickly be forgotten.

The transcontinental race from Palm Springs, California, was won by E. D. Weiner in a P-51, followed by Mike Carroll in a Hawker Sea Fury.

The Women's Race saw a victory by Pat Arnold in her Comanche at 181.543 mph, second was Edna Gardner Whyte at 176.861 mph, and third was Elaine Loening at 170.334 mph.

In the Sport Biplane race, top qualifier was Lee Mahoney (Starduster) at a record 157.618 mph, with McIntyre second at 154.905 mph. In the Finals, Mahoney won at 155.119 mph, McIntyre was second at 154.493 mph, and Bill Boland was third at 151.108 mph.

The feature of the Labor Day weekend meet was the 190 Cu. In. Class race. Bill Falck led time trials with 206.61 mph, Bob Downey was second at 204.55 mph, and Steve Wittman was third at 200.00 mph. In the 12-lap Final Race, Falck won by less than half a second over Downey: 202.893 mph to 202.722 mph. Wittman was third at 196.757 mph.

The crowds were large, and the site offered a great view of the race course. With a local management team, the meet appeared to have a good future.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> National Championship Air Races

Three weeks later, Reno held its annual event, with more pilots, a wider variety of airplanes and continuation of its perfect safety record.

The transcontinental race saw history made, as Mike Carroll beat all the Mustangs to win at 420 mph in his British Sea Fury, the first time any other type of airplane had beaten the Mustangs in a long-distance race. E.D. Weiner was second in a P-51 at 403 mph, and Dick Kestle was third in a P-51 at 307 mph.

The Sport Biplane Class saw its biggest turn-out, with 19 airplanes. Time trials were won by Bill Boland at 153.584 mph, second was Clem Fischer at 149.502 mph, and third was Sid White at 148.760 mph. After many heat races, the Championship Race produced a win for Boland at 151.643 mph, a second place for White at 151.31 mph, and a third place for McIntyre at 151.286 mph. Four of the six finalists flew Mong Sports.

Thirteen 190 Cu. In Class midgets competed, with Falck leading time trials at 203.160 mph, Cote second at 201.794 mph, and Downey third at 200.000 mph. In the Championship Race, Falck won at 202.703 mph, Downey was second at 201.192 mph, and Cote was third at 200.557 mph.

The Unlimited Class race attracted 11 entries, with Greenamyer taking time trials at 406.780 mph, Lyford second at 398.340 mph and Weiner a surprising third at 397.790 mph. The Championship Race saw a third consecutive win by Greenamyer, this time at 392.621 mph. Weiner was second at 373.712 mph, and Lacy was third at 363.207 mph, as Lyford blew his engine.

## Part 5 – 1968

### The Maryland National Air Races

The meet on July 5-7 at Frederick, Maryland, was conducted by John Tegler's Atlantic Coast Air Races and was better run than the last, though it lost money. All racing was on the longest course yet—3.5 miles—which all-but-guaranteed speed records.

Nine pilots entered the Women's Stock Plane Class, with Judy Wagner setting a national one-lap record in time trials of 195.23 mph. Dot Etheridge was second in an Aero Commander at 191.38 mph, and Elaine Loening was third in a Meyers 200 at 190.75 mph. In the Finals, Etheridge won at a record 198.11 mph, Loening was second at 195.58 mph, and Pat Arnold (Comanche 260) was third at 182.63 mph.

In the Sport Biplane Class, Dallas Christian smashed all records with a qualifying lap of 178.62 mph in his highly modified "Mongster". "Skeeter" Royall was second at 160.00 mph in a modified Pitts Special, while in third was Michael DuPont in a Pitts at 153.28 mph. In the Finals, it was Christian with a national record for a heat race at 177.16 mph. DuPont was second at 155.97 mph, and Royall was third at 155.53 mph.

The 190 Cu. In. Class became Formula One on January 1 with the increase in the piston displacement limit to 201 cu. in. to accommodate the Continental O-200 engine, as C-85s had become too scarce. This contributed to Bill Falck's qualifying record of 224.87 mph, adding 11 mph to his 1966 mark. Bob Downey was second at 213.79 mph, and Marion Baker was third in his new "BooRay" at 209.53 mph.

In the Final Heat—10 laps of the 3.5-mile course—Bill Falck overcame the drawback of excessive airframe weight to move to the fore and win by a half second over Bob Downey, 218.18 mph to 217.99 mph, after which Downey was penalized to fifth place for cutting a pylon. Elevated to second was Marion Baker at 205.45 mph, and to third, Jim Wilson (Cassutt "Snoopy") at 200.80 mph.

### The 36<sup>th</sup> King's Cup Race

At Nottingham on August 24, this classic event saw the 16 highest placing pilots from a series of qualifying rounds start the six laps of a 13.2-mile course. The winner was Ron Hayter in a deH. Hornet Moth at 121 mph, second was A.J. Spiller in a Cessna 180 at 160.5 mph, and third was John Stewart-Wood in a Cessna 172 at 135 mph.

## The Cleveland National Air Races

The meet went into its second year under local management. The six-pylon oval course, half of which was over Lake Erie, proved popular.

The Women's Stock Plane race saw Judy Wagner extend her domination of the class, winning time trials at 187.89 mph to Elaine Loening's 185.19 mph. In the 8-lap Finals, she won at 189.27 mph, to Dot Etheridge's 188.48 mph.

The Sport Biplane Class drew 10 entries, half of them from the western USA. Top qualifier was Dallas Christian at 173.91 mph, followed by Sid White at 160.29 mph and Michael DuPont at 150.13 mph. In the 12-lap Finals, Christian made it look good, edging DuPont by 1½ seconds: 155.55 mph to 155.22 mph.

The spotlight was on Formula One, where the top two qualifiers were veterans of the 1940's Goodyear Races: Bill Falck at 214.29 mph and Bob Downey at 209.30 mph. The Finals was another good "show", as Falck beat Downey by 0.45 seconds: 215.246 mph to 215.053 mph. The crowd loved it.

## The 5<sup>th</sup> National Championship Air Races

The major race of the year, on September 20-22, was opened by the 1,667-mile transcontinental race from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which saw an easy win by E.D. Weiner. His 361.141 mph brought him home more than an hour quicker than runner-up Dick Kestle, also in a Mustang, at 278.458 mph.

A new class bowed in, for stock North American AT-6s and SNJs and Harvard advanced trainers. A demonstration race at Reno in 1967 proved popular, and so they became a part of the program. Nineteen of these warbirds arrived, though only 12 could fit into the preliminary heat races. Top qualifier was Howard Keefe at 179.700 mph, second was Whit Halfhill at 179.104 mph. In the Finals, Hendrik Otzen won at 181.322 mph, Richard Sykes was second at 181.246 mph, and Phil Livingston was third at 180.980 mph. All their races were close and loud.

The Stock Plane Class drew nine entries, Judy Wagner again winning time trials, at 186.528 mph, this time in a new aerobatic Bonanza. In the Finals, she encountered mechanical problems and finished last. The winner was Dot Etheridge in a Meyers 200 at 190.686 mph, second was Elaine Loening in a 200 at 189.391 mph, and third was Mona Coons in a Comanche at 183.284 mph.

The Sport Biplane Class' 15 qualifiers were led by Dallas Christian at 171.429 mph, Bill Boland at 169.811 mph, and Sid White at 156.295 mph. In the Finals, Christian's Mongster was too clean and too powerful for the field, allowing him to win with ease at 175.126 mph. Boland was second at 171.180 mph, and Clem Fischer was third at 155.150 mph. All three flew versions of the Mong Sport.

A dozen Formula Ones were led in time trials by Ray Cote at 210.938 mph, Bill Falck at 210.117 mph, and Marion Baker at 205.323 mph. The poor take-off acceleration of Falck's heavy "Rivets" allowed Cote to get a huge lead in the Championship Race and to win at 214.605 mph. Falck was well back at 212.355 mph, and Bob Downey was third at 211.869 mph.

In the Unlimited Class, time trials meant less than usual, Chuck Hall leading with just 379.653 mph, as no one risked blowing an engine. The Finals were unusually competitive, with Greenamyer winning his fourth in a row, at 388.654 mph. Barely one second back was Clay Lacy at 388.119 mph, and in third was Hall at 386.852 mph.

## Part 6 – 1969

### Florida National Air Races

Held February 14-16 at Executive Airport, Ft. Lauderdale, it was another Atlantic Coast Air Races operation. The opening event was a 930-mile cross-country race in which all six pilots flew P-51 Mustangs. The winner was Ed Bowlin at 310.81 mph, second was Dick Kestle at 293.86 mph.

In the AT-6 Class race, Howard Keefe won Time Trials at 185.25 mph, followed closely by John Trainor at 184.16 mph. In the Championship Race, Trainor won at 175.99 mph, Leo Volkmer was second at 175.14 mph and Keefe was third at 174.10 mph.

The Stock Plane race saw Elaine Loening lead time trials at 195.65 mph, with Dot Etheridge second at 195.30 mph. The Championship Race was won by Berni Stevenson in a Marchetti 260 at a record 198.10 mph, Judy Wagner was second at 189.53 mph, and Etheridge was third at 185.18 mph.

In the Sport Biplane Class, a third qualifying record was set, as Dallas Christian turned 183.01 mph. "Skeeter" Royall was second at 170.62 mph, and Clark Woodard ("Susie Bee") was third at 158.82 mph. The Championship Race was a close battle between winner Christian at 180.96 mph and Royall at 179.95 mph. Christian was then dropped to fourth for cutting a pylon, giving Royall the win and the record.

Bill Falck came back after his loss at Reno to set a Formula One qualifying record of 231.26 mph. Bob Downey was second at 217.30 mph, and Nick Jones was third at 216.00 mph. The Championship Race was called on account of darkness, with Falck declared the winner on the basis of speeds in heat races.

### The Daily Mail Transatlantic Race

From May 4 through 11, contestants could travel between New York's Empire State Building and London's Post Office Tower by any combination of vehicles. Out of 390 competitors, the eastbound winner was Peter Goddard, using a Royal Navy Phantom II plus a motorcycle and two helicopters, for a time of 5 hours, 11 minutes. For the westbound race, Tom Lecky-Thompson flew a Royal Air Force Harrier, plus helicopters, for a time of 6 hours, 12 minutes.

## The 37<sup>th</sup> King's Cup Race

The site was Rochester, Kent, for the July 11-12 event. Two qualifying rounds led to the finals for 16 starters, the winner being Robin d'Erlanger in a single-seat Turbulent at 99.5 mph, second was Charles Masefield in a Beagle Pup at 138.75 mph, and third was Ron Hayter in a Hornet Moth at 123.0 mph.

## The St. Louis National Air Races

This new meet was held August 8-10 around a 3-mile oval course at Spirit of St. Louis Airport, Chesterfield, Missouri. It was the first race after PRPA dropped its long-time "men-only" rule in the face of threatened legal action. The sponsor was the St. Louis County Police Welfare Association.

Fourteen pilots entered the AT-6 Class race, with Richard Minges and Ed Snyder tying for first in time trials with a national record of 187.83 mph. In the 8-lap Championship Race, Minges won at 187.70 mph for a national heat record. Snyder was second at 185.53 mph, and John Trainor was third at 184.93 mph.

In the Sport Biplane race, Dallas Christian led 15 qualifiers with 182.43 mph, but then damaged a wing on take-off. In second was "Skeeter" Royal at 167.96 mph, and in third, Clem Fischer at 158.36 mph. The Championship Race, for 8 laps, saw Royal win at 160.39 mph, Fischer second at 157.84 mph, and Earl Hoffman third at 152.27 mph.

The Formula One race drew 13 qualifiers, led by Ray Cote at 227.85 mph, Bill Falck at 227.37 mph, and Bob Downey at 216.87 mph. In the 12-lap Championship Race, Cote got off to a big lead, which Falck methodically reduced, winning in record time by 1.1 seconds: 222.99 mph to Cote's 222.38 mph. Downey was third at 213.33 mph.

Prospects for a second race at St. Louis were ended by financial irregularities.

## The Cleveland National Air Races

Three races in a row were held at Cleveland, but there was no sign of growth. The big development was the opening of the Women's Stock Plane Class to men.

The Stock Plane race attracted 13 entries, three of them flown by men. Top qualifier, however, was Judy Wagner at a record 199.56 mph, followed by Mary Knapp in a Marchetti 260 at 193.97 mph, and Bob Downey in Elaine Loening's Meyers 200 at 193.13 mph. In the Championship Race, Judy Wagner won at 196.46 mph, Mary Knapp was second at 193.63 mph, and Elaine Loening was third at 188.16 mph. This would be the last race for this class, as its reason for existence had vanished.

In the AT-6 Class race, the winner of time trials was Bob Mitchem with 187.50 mph. Second was Ed Snyder at 183.67 mph, and third was Richard Minges at 181.09 mph. In the Championship Race, Mitchem won at a heat record 188.20 mph, Minges was second at 185.41 mph, and Snyder was third at 185.03 mph.

Bill Falck again led time trials, at 216.87 mph, Jim Wilson was second at 203.16 mph, and Bob Downey was third at 202.25 mph. In the Championship Race, Falck toyed with Downey, then moved away to win at 213.77 mph to Downey's 212.89 mph. Steve Witman was third at 206.42 mph.

## The 6<sup>th</sup> National Championship Air Races

Reno was firmly established as the home of air racing, having already out-lasted several claimants to the title. Action began on September 14 and continued through the 21<sup>st</sup>. The Harold's Club Transcontinental Race from Milwaukee drew 10 starters and produced an unusually close finish. Dick Kestle won by 56 seconds over Jack Sliker, 313.12 mph to 312.21 mph. P-51 pilots took the first six places.

The AT-6 Class set records with 27 qualifiers and Ben Hall's breaking of the "200 mph barrier" with a lap at 200.37 mph. Ed Snyder and Dick Minges tied for second in trials at 191.15 mph. In the Championship Race, Hall won at 190.90 mph, breaking Bob Mitchem's three-week old record. Minges was second at 182.13 mph, and Don Phillippi was third at 179.89 mph.

Nineteen Sport Biplanes qualified, with Dallas Christian leading at 178.51 mph and Bill Boland second at 174.19 mph. Connie Marsh became the first woman to qualify in a previously men-only class. In the Championship Race, Christian broke "Skeeter" Royall's seven-month old mark with an average of 184.02 mph, to runner-up Boland's 183.49 mph. Dave Forbes, in a modified Miniplane, was third at 159.29 mph.

Formula One produced 16 pilots and airplanes, with Ray Cote topping qualifiers at 219.51 mph, Falck second at 214.29 mph, and Marion Baker third at 212.18 mph. In the 12-lap Championship Race, Cote won at a national record 225.55 mph to Falck's 223.41 mph and Bob Downey's 212.46 mph. Roy Berry and Jack Jella were involved in a mid-air collision in which neither pilot was hurt and neither airplane suffered more than slight damage.

Darryl Greenamyer continued his domination of the Unlimited Class, by leading 13 qualifiers with 414.63 mph. Clay Lacy was well back in second at 380.60 mph. In the 12-lap, 102-mile Championship Race, Greenamyer broke Cook Cleland's 20-year old heat race record with an average of 412.63 mph. He led runner-up Chuck Hall (377.23 mph) by more than a lap at the finish.

## The England to Australia Race

Honoring the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight between these two countries in 1919, it was open to all aircraft, which were divided into weight and power classes. It started December 18 from Gatwick Airport, south of London, and finished in Sydney, Australia on January 3. Of the 72 starters, more than three-quarters flew American Pipers, Beechcraft and Cessnas.

The over-all winner was W.J. Bright and F.L. Buxton, in a Britten-Norman Islander. Second was J.A. Masling in a Cessna 310, and third were B.C. Holland and H.J. Shaw in a Piper Twin Comanche.