

# 2015 AirVenture Cup: Shorter, but quick

By Randy Dufault

As it is with many general aviation events, the route for this year's edition of the AirVenture Cup Race was a bit different than the original plan called for.

A weather system that appeared to range far and wide developed right on top of the course between the starting line at Mount Vernon, Illinois, and the first turn point at Dixon, Illinois. Race Chairman Eric Whyte and other race officials quickly went to work looking for a new launch site. Dixon was an obvious choice, but the airport's ramp could not accommodate this year's group of 70 race planes.

A call to M&M Aviation Services Ltd. at Whiteside County Airport just west of Dixon confirmed that its ramp could easily fit all the racers.

Each pilot picked their way around the clouds from Mount Vernon to Whiteside County. Despite warnings from briefers that the area of weather would be difficult to dodge, Sam Hoskins, pilot of Race 22, a Quickie Q200, said, "All we had to do was go straight north. All the stuff that the radar said was there,

wasn't. Most of us didn't have any problem at all repositioning."

Once everyone arrived at Whiteside County and refueled, the race was off. The 240-mile, Z-shaped course was designed to avoid both the arrivals into EAA AirVenture Oshkosh 2015 and an active military exercise.

The race ended, as it has for several years now, at Wausau, Wisconsin. EAA Chapter 640 provided a nice lunch for the pilots and crews before they left to make their way to Oshkosh.

According to Whyte good weather and a shorter course made for very quick times. The fastest plane, Race 104, Marty Abbott's Turbine Legend, finished the course with an average speed of over 357 mph. Two other classes finished with less than two seconds separating the first two finishers.

For some the annual race is a chance to extract as much speed out of their airplanes as is possible.

"It's a disease," Hoskins said.

"I've modified [the Quickie's O-200 engine] with electronic fuel injection, in addition to electronic ignition and high compression pistons."

"I get really good mileage. I was showing 205 mph true airspeed and burning 8 gph wide open."

Hoskins and others like Mike Patey, who raced his new turbine-powered Legacy for the first time, look for every possible mile per hour, but others enter for the camaraderie.

"It's the people," Carri Hoagland, pilot of Race 19, said. "It's all the new friends that you meet and the old ones you get to see. You get together and just have more fun."

"There are a few people that may have to be in first place," she said. "We just have a good time."

2015 was Hoagland's fifth time in the competition and the first time his daughter Beth rode along. His first three races were in a Taylorcraft and the last two in a homebuilt Emeraude. Both airplanes are far from what could be considered racing designs.

In odd numbered years the race departs from Mount Vernon and heads west to Wisconsin. Even numbered years start in Mitchell, South Dakota, and travel east. Both race courses end in Wausau. **AVT**



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