

RED BULL *Air Race* WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP



Tim Barnes-Clay gets our engines revving with a look at the most thrilling air race in the world

Created in 2003, and officially the World Championship of air racing since 2005, the Red Bull Air Race is followed by millions of fans across the globe.

The fastest motorsport series in the world features 14 of the best race pilots in a pure motorsport competition that combines speed, precision and skill.

Using the fastest, most agile and lightweight racing planes, pilots navigate a low-level aerial track made up of air-filled pylons 25 meters high.

New since 2014 is the Challenger Cup, a competition which enables young talented pilots to work towards gaining entry into the Master Class of the Red Bull Air Race World Championship.

When the 2015 Red Bull Air Race World Championship kicked off in Abu Dhabi on 13th/14th February, defending champion Nigel Lamb had his work cut out for him.

The Brit was pushed to the limits by the 2008 world champion Hannes Arch who finished second overall last year – and the two-time world champion Paul Bonhomme, who won last year's season opener in Abu Dhabi and was third overall in 2014.





In what is shaping up to be one of the most competitive fields in the history of the world's fastest motorsports series, Lamb will also be trying to stay on top of the expanded roster of 14 pilots in the high-speed, low-altitude sport.

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There were five different winners in the eight races last season as the gaps between victory and defeat dwindled to their closest ever, just a mere thousandth of a second separating some heats, and nine of the 12 pilots made it onto the podium at least once.

"It's going to be a very exciting and competitive year," said Lamb, who was fifth in last year's Abu Dhabi race and second in 2010.

Hot on his heels will be Nicolas Ivanoff of France, Pete McLeod of Canada, Matt Hall of Australia, Matthias Dolderer from Germany,



Martin Sonka of the Czech Republic and Yoshi Muroya from Japan – all of whom won podium places in 2014.

Former Abu Dhabi winners Peter Besenyei of Hungary, who won in 2005 and 2007, and Kirby Chambliss of the USA, who won Abu Dhabi in 2006, will also be back.

Rounding out the field are American Michael Goulian and two newcomers, Francois Le Vot of France and Juan Velarde from Spain, who achieved promotion from last year's inaugural Challenger Cup.

Abu Dhabi, the largest of the seven emirates, offers one of the most beautiful settings on the race calendar with the track set up on

the turquoise waters of the Arabian Gulf in front of the city's glistening skyline and the bustling Corniche Road.

However, it is also one of the most challenging races due to the hot temperatures and capricious winds.

"The winds in Abu Dhabi shift from one moment to the next, blowing in from a completely different direction," said Jim DiMatteo, Race Director. "Those sudden changes make the track even more difficult for the pilots when they're flying through it at 370 km/h."

Following on from Abu Dhabi, the event will include first-ever races in Japan, with a stop in Chiba on 16th/17th May. The championship

then moves to another new country, Russia, with an eagerly awaited stop in the sports-focused city of Sochi on 30th/31st May. Budapest, Hungary – which hosted seven races between 2003 and 2009 – will be back on the calendar with a stop on 4th/5th July.

The second half of the 2015 Red Bull Air Race World Championship season starts on 15th/16th August in Ascot, Great Britain, before it makes a triumphant return to Spielberg, Austria on 5th/6th September.

The 2015 season concludes with two stops in the United States – a return to Fort Worth in Texas on 26th/27th September and then the season finale on 17th/18th October in Las Vegas.



2015 RACE CALENDAR

Abu Dhabi, UAE	3rd & 14th	February
Chiba, Japan	16th & 17th	May
Sochi, Russia	30th & 31st	May
Budapest, Hungary	4th & 5th	July
Ascot, United Kingdom	15th & 16th	August
Spielberg, Austria	5th & 6th	September
Fort Worth, Texas, United States	26th & 27th	September
Las Vegas, Nevada, United States	17th & 18th	October