



Local woman represents Purdue University in Air Race Classic

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A local woman will help her team fly to new heights piloting a plane to Canada in the Air Race Classic.

Before her senior year at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., Katie Sparrow has worked her way up to captain of the team set to compete in Air Race Classic that began Tuesday. The team is one of five representing their schools in this all-female, cross-country air race.

The Air Race Classic began in 1929 but was called the First Women's Air Derby and is in its 31st year. The goal is to make the most precise cross-country flight, which starts in Oklahoma and ends in New Brunswick.

Sparrow, from Greeley and Windsor, graduated from Windsor High School in 2004. She will graduate next May with a bachelors degree in Professional Flight Technology.

All teams are required to fly approximately 2,573 miles in four days, and each team is given a handicap speed for its plane. According to Sparrow, the handicap speed is the average speed each plane can fly, and the team that has the highest speed above their handicap wins the race. The scores are calculated by dividing the total flight time by the number of miles in the course.

"It's flexible as to how you fly the race," said Sparrow.

Though the competition only lasts four days, each team dedicates a lot more time.

"We are on the road for two and a half weeks," Sparrow said.

A huge aspect of the competition is the financial responsibility each team has. Sparrow estimated that the total cost for her team to compete in Air Race Classic is in the ball park of \$8,000 dollars.

"Even the first place prize isn't enough money to cover the cost of the race," said Sparrow.

Last year, Purdue's team received \$3,000 for their third-place finish. Sparrow said there is a specific trophy that each collegiate team is competing for which Purdue also won in last year's competition.

The Race

The Air Race Classic lifted off Tuesday in Oklahoma City, Okla., and ends Friday in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada.

Teams will stop in McCook, Neb., Denison, Iowa, Jefferson City, Mo., Bowling Green, Ky., Lewisburg, W. Va., Elmira, N.Y., Burlington, Vt., and Bangor, Maine, before the finish.

For more information, go to info@airraceclassic.org.

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