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## Purdue notches second air race win

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For the second consecutive year two Purdue University students were awarded first place in the collegiate division of the Air Race Classic. Winners of the four-day transcontinental flight challenge for American and Canadian pilots were announced Sunday night at a banquet in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada.

Katie Sparrow and Marie Janus, both juniors in the flight program, flew the Purdue team plane, a Piper Warrior, about 2,500 miles from Oklahoma City to St. John.

"We are so glad to bring the trophy back," Janus said. "Katie and I live together and the trophy found its way on to our piano during the past year."

They also won fourth overall out of 47 teams with a \$1,500 award, and first in the Piper division. Four other colleges participated.

"It was a nerve racking three days for us," Sparrow said. "It was very fast paced and we are relieved that it is over. We are really ecstatic."

While teams had four days to complete the course, Janus and Sparrow finished in three.

Limiting their time on the ground, the two fueled the plane and themselves quickly and returned to the sky.

A seven member ground crew based at Purdue provided information on demand to the pilots.

"Our ground crew was a big part of our success," Janus said.

Winning is not based on when a plane finishes but on a scoring system based on how fast pilots can fly over their handicap. A handicap number is based on their plane's top speed. Accelerating beyond the speed, by getting behind tailwinds and employing other flying skills, increases the score.

Winds were the biggest challenge this year.

"More cross winds this year," said Sparrow, a member of last year's ground crew. "There were a lot more decisions to make of when to fly and when to leave."

Sparrow was the pilot. Janus was the co-pilot. Sparrow co-piloted last year's third-place team and will take a mentoring role next year. Janus will pilot the 2008 team.

The Air Race Classic, founded in 2002, is an annual plane race for women.

The team was told Friday they were in the top 12 overall. The dozen planes were then inspected to check for illegal modifications made during the race.

The top 10 finalists received a cash prizes with first place given \$5,000.

The race was made of nine courses, including stops in Denison, Iowa, Lewisburg, W. Va., and Burlington, Vt., on the path to St. John.