

Red Bull Air Race World Championship

RETURNS!

Abu Dhabi (UAE)April 17-18
 San DiegoMay 9-10
 Windsor, OntarioJune 13-14
 Budapest, HungaryAugust 19-20
 Porto, PortugalSeptember 12-13
 Barcelona, SpainOctober 3-4

Fifteen of the world's top race pilots, including four rookies from four corners of the globe, will compete in the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in 2009, which will touch down in six spectacular locations beginning with the traditional season opener in Abu Dhabi, April 17-18.

"The world's fastest motorsport" will then move to North America for races in San Diego and Windsor, Ontario (just across the river from Detroit, or in fact along the river), before heading to Europe for stops in Budapest, Porto and Barcelona. In 2006, a million spectators packed the beachfront at Barcelona, an enchanting Spanish city on the Mediterranean; this year's much-anticipated return sees the final race of the season and the crowning of a 2009 World Champion.

Flying at speeds reaching 230 mph (370 km/hr) and pulling up to 12 Gs, the pilots navigate unique and demanding race courses, negotiating their way through 20-meter-high inflatable air gates. Austrian Hannes Arch, who last year became the first European to win the championship, will defend his title against a talented crop of pilots who have been busy honing their skills in the off-season and working on improvements to their planes. They will all be up against four new pilots from four continents who join the elite field this year. At age 25, Canada's Pete McLeod will be the youngest-ever pilot in the high-speed, precision flying race, and he will be joined by three other rookies: Yoshihide Muroya of Japan, Matt Hall of Australia and Matthias Dolderer of Germany.

The expanded field of fifteen pilots has led to the creation of a slick new race format that includes a "wild card"

While waiting for race day, fire yourself up with a Kirby Chambliss World of Red Bull Limited Edition 4-pack.



session to open race day. The day will provide constant race action and four pilots going up against each other in an all-out final for victory and spots on the podium.

With the new race format, ambitious new talent and the top veteran pilots from 2008 returning to battle it out, 2009 promises to be another year of thrills, upsets and nail-biting tension.

For more info, photos, video clips, pilot bios and details about the new race format, visit www.redbullairrace.com. ■

Arizona's Kirby Chambliss wants World Champion title back

Kirby Chambliss, Red Bull Air Race 2006 World Champion, was a strong contender for the top trophy in 2008, winning two of eight races and finishing 3rd overall. It was a strong comeback for the 2006 champ, who had failed to win a single race in 2007 and ended up a distant 4th. But despite getting back on the podium for the third time in four years, Chambliss was not very happy about 2008—because he did not win the title. As he famously told us before San Diego last year, "second place is nothing but the first loser."

He has therefore been working hard in the off-season, focusing on three areas: plane, tactics and fitness—especially his plane. He has also set up a track section on his Arizona ranch to duplicate race conditions for training. Chambliss spends most of the off-season at home in Arizona. "We're very focused on training and testing. I have a runway out of my back door and an aerobic box on my property where I can train. So why go anywhere else?"

Chambliss, in a class by himself in 2006 with four victories in eight races, is surely not going to be genuinely happy until he has a winning streak like that again. In 2007, he finished

behind Austria's Hannes Arch and Britain's Paul Bonhomme. He was still in hot contention mid-season, with two victories (Detroit and London) in the first five races. But he got zero points in Budapest and dropped far behind, even though he was 2nd in the next race in Porto.

"With a faster airplane I'm hoping to win many more (races this year)," says Chambliss. "We're making changes to our plane that I'm very excited about. But I cannot disclose them at this point." Pilots used to openly share information about their modifications, but as part of race evolution he and his rivals are now more secretive about what goes into and onto their planes.

Everyone was surprised by the rapid rise of Arch from 10th in his rookie season to 1st in 2008. "Hannes had all three of the things that it takes to win: a fast airplane, a good crew and he was flying well," Chambliss said. "A little luck also doesn't hurt. It shows that this whole thing has become much more competitive."

We will follow his progress closely; we already have plans to be in San Diego in May, as well as tentatively one of the European stops. Stay tuned! ■

And not to be missed... the Red Bull Wings Team ladies.

Red Bull Air Race VIP Experience Pilot Sergio Pla of Spain takes a passenger through some serious g-forces during an aerobatic exhibition flight.



Kirby Chambliss (right) with 2008 World Champion Hannes Arch of Austria. May the best man win.