

# Skysport-UK



## How to Win the King George V Kings Cup Air Race

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## How to Win the Kings Cup Air Race?

The **King's Cup Race** is an annual **British handicapped** cross-country **air race**, is run by the **Royal Aero Club Records Racing and Rally Association** and was first contested on 8 September 1922. The event was open to British pilots only, but that did include members of the **Commonwealth**.<sup>[1]</sup> The event was established by **King**



**George V** as an incentive to the development of **light aircraft** and **engine** design. The first race was an 810-mile contest from **Croydon Aerodrome**, south of London, to **Glasgow**, Scotland and back again after an overnight stop. The winner of the first race was **Frank L. Barnard**, chief pilot of the **Instone Air Line**, in a passenger-carrying **Airco DH.4A**.<sup>[2]</sup> There were no races during **World War II** (1939–45), and the contest did not resume until 1949. The race was abandoned in 1951, due to bad weather. In 1953 a crowd of 10,000 watching the King's Cup Air

Race meeting at Southend-on-Sea Essex, saw a mid-air collision in which John Crowther, a hotelier from the Marine Hotel, Tankerton, Kent, was killed. Along with the **Schneider Trophy**, and the **British Air Racing Championship**, it is one of the most sought after prizes of an air racing season.

How to win the Kings Cup air race, well this is a question? Some would say “using lady luck” others “bending the rules” and yet more would say “proper training and experience”. Well the latter is just what we do, we provide you with the proper training and our experience at the same time.

On joining the Royal Aero Club's Air Racing scene in 1984, the racing association requested me only to show that I could manage a sixty degree banked turn! Not much you might say, certainly there was no experience in that. So I had to do that bit by myself and it was very slow. By 1989 I had won two significant races the Rotterdam to London Air Race and the most prestigious of all, the King George VI Kings Cup Trophy. On reaching 1996 I had entered around seventy or more races and had snaffled the Kings Cup again in 1993. By now I was a flying instructor and gave my friends at Elstree Aero Club an Air Racing Talk. Such was their enthusiasm, it sparked off the need for proper Air Racing Course and without delay it was born, and we were ahead of the game!



This course's success was greatly appreciated by the RAeC Records Racing & Rally Association. They morphed me into a Race Check Pilot and invited me to organise their first Air Race School using this training package as its primary briefing. Since those then it has been continually refined and is now a very efficient one day training session. Between the pilots attending this course and yours truly, in the past twenty six years we have won the Kings Cup Race no less than ten times and many other races too!

Trainee racers now attend a one day “training school” in a “one to one” situation. This contains a Ninety Minute Briefing of the Rules & Race Handling Technique, followed by an afternoon session of actual practise race-flying broken into two or three sorties,

dependant on the pilot's uptake. This also includes their race check! For the main pre-flight briefing pilots are supplied with a personal copy of our SkysportUK Race



Training Manual overlaid with a fully detailed Power point Presentation. Flight training commences with high altitude aircraft handling assessment, majoring on steep turns, later followed by low level flying around a small dummy course. This low level work combines basic race navigation techniques with the vital turning and angles of bank necessary for an air

race. The core requirements taught are the safe management of the low level course at or just above 500ft AGL without excessive climbing or descent in the steep turns. The turn limits flown vary between 2 or 3g according to the actual aircraft type the pilot uses in the races.

When successfully completed, and it usually is, we sign the pilot off as "Safe to Race" and he or she can apply for their FAI Competition Licence and entry to our associations races. Often pilots have informed us that they not only enjoy this course but it also saves them the experience of at least three air races! So there you go, join us and become a winner of the Kings Cup! Eventually of course because it does not always come at once, but that is just where Lady Luck helps out!

## Roger Hayes CFI Skysport-UK



Royal Aero Club: *Silver Medal Holder for Air Racing*

Four Times Winner of the King George VI Kings Cup  
1989 1993 1999 2005