



**FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE
INTERNATIONALE
Ballooning Commission**

Hall of Fame

Josef Starkbaum

Inducted 2008



JOSEF STARKBAUM

Austria

Inducted 2008

22 March 1934, Brunn

Josef Starkbaum is an Austrian balloon pilot who won the Gordon Bennett race seven times (six times in succession) between 1985 and 1993. He is an expert alpine balloonist and has won the "BP Alpine Balloon Trophy Race" ten times. Over his ballooning career he has served as Delegate or Alternate Delegate to the CIA since 1976 and has been Competition Director for Austrian and international competitions. Starkbaum received the FAI Montgolfier Diploma for contributions to the sport of ballooning.

Image pending

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Born on March 22, 1934 in Brünn, Süd-Mähren (today Brno, Jihomoravský kraj/Czech Republic) he spent his early years in Kornitz, Süd-Mähren (today Kornice, Jihomoravský kraj/Czech Republic), where his father was a judge.

He visited the primary school in Kornitz from 1940 to 1948, when his Family was exiled and went to Vienna (Austria), where from 1948 to 1953 he studied at the Bundesgewerbeschule (HTL - Höhere Technische Lehranstalt). After graduating, he worked as a design engineer in the tool-making industry in Austria. He left this job pretty soon and studied engineering management in Graz, Austria. Shortly after this he emigrated to Canada, planning to become an airline pilot, which was at that time not yet possible in Austria. In order to pay for his pilot's tuition he worked for an engineering company in Canada.

In 1957 he obtained his temporary commercial pilot's licence, and started his line pilot training with Trans Canada Airlines (Air Canada). He flew with the McDonnell Douglas DC-3 in Vancouver and with the Vickers Viscount in Montreal. In order to obtain his Canadian licence, he would have been obliged to acquire the Canadian citizenship, and therefore he decided, in 1960, to return to Austria. In May 1960 he applied for and obtained a job with the newly founded Austrian Airlines, where already in 1961 he was promoted captain and thus becoming the youngest airline captain in any European IATA airline. During his airline career he flew on DC-3, Viscount, Caravelle, DC-9, MD-81 to MD-87. After retiring in 1994, he continued flying a Lear Jet for the Austrian *Ärztflugambulanz (air rescue)*.

Apart from his professional career, he founded a family and had three daughters and a son. His son Markus is a captain with Austrian Airlines, where one of his daughters is also working as a stewardess.

During his whole life he was an active sportsman in various sports: Skiing, mountaineering (Kilimanjaro), Jiu Jitsu, fencing, wild water rafting, car racing (circuit and rallies), parachuting, gliding and rotorcraft piloting. Ballooning became his passion and he made it into the History books with his many extraordinary performances and records achieved in many different types of balloons.

Obliged to retire from active "commercial" flying activities on age reasons, all that remains to him today is skiing, motorcycle driving, car racing with his Porsche, flying "light" aircraft and balloons.

Josef Starkbaum: Major achievements

- Austrian NAC Delegate or Alternate Delegate to the FAI Ballooning Commission (CIA), attending 30 Plenary Meetings from 1975 to 2009. He has also served on the Rules-and Records Subcommittees for several years.
- Competition Director of national and international competitions.
- Jury member on several international events, eg. First Hot Air Airship World Championship in Luxembourg.
- Advisor of the Austrian Ministry of Aviation ballooning matters.
- Instructor since 1975 and at the present time examiner for pilots and instructors in Austria. He was particularly active as an instructor for night flying on the international scene during the late seventies and early eighties.

- Innovations:
 - Introduction of the first modern hot air balloon in Austria in 1973.

- Systematic research of the condition of hot air balloons in the mountains.
 - First complete crossing of the alps from plain to plain on April 20th, 1974. T/O was at the Salzburg Airport/Austria, Landing in Tenetise near Ljubliana/Yugoslavia. Distance 196 km, Duration 6:07 hrs/min.
 - Organizer of the first Winter Hot Air Balloon Meeting in the Alps in 1975 in Zell am See/Austria.
 - He passed on the experience gained during the first years of flying in the Mountains by writing numerous articles for ballooning magazines (Freiballon, Aerostat, Ballooning etc). In 1981 he published the booklet "Ballooning in the Mountains" which is still being used for instructions in some parts of the world.
 - Introduction of the first modern light weight net-less Hydrogen Balloon in competition flying (GBR, Worlds)
 - Design and construction of the "Bypass Burner". This burner has the power output of a double burner but creates considerably less noise. Design and construction of several high altitude burners for altitude records.
- Sporting Activities:
 - 2 times Gas Balloon World Champion
 - 2 times Hot Air Balloon European Champion
 - 5 times Hot Air Balloon National Champion
 - 7 times winner of the GBR (6 times in row), an all time record
 - 10 times winner of the "BP Alpine Balloon Trophy Race"
 - 6 Altitude World Records.
 - The Altitude Record in Class AX-8 of 15.011m established on July 21, 1998, was the highest altitude achieved in a balloon without pressurization equipment (pressure suit or capsule).
 - He has accumulated a total of over 1400 flights and 2700 hours in balloons.