

The *Schneiders*

PART TWO

WITH THIS INSTALLMENT, WE EXAMINE THE YEARS 1920 THROUGH 1922 — LACKLUSTER YEARS WITH LITTLE PROGRESS. HOWEVER, THAT WAS SOON TO CHANGE

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WOULD 1920 BE BETTER?

The Royal Aero Club of Italy conducted the 1920 contest, this time ten laps of a narrow 37.5-kilometer (23.3-statute-miles) triangle at Venice. The scheduled date was 20 September.

For this year, and anxious to achieve a legitimate win, the Italians were able to get the rules amended to require a fixed 300-kilogram (661-lbs) load as “payload,” a detail that favored the flying boat designs preferred by Italy. This rule held only for 1920.

Looking almost like a painting, the fanciful Monaco backdrop serves as a setting for the Savoia S.17, Nieuport-Tellier, and Savoia Standard S.13.



Savoia S.17 and Sadi Lecointe's Nieuport-Tellier-Sunbeam beach at Monaco during the 1920 event.



The SIAL Savoia S.2 fitted with an Ansaldo 550-hp motor was piloted by Luigi Bologna at an average speed of 107-mph to win the 1920 Venice event.

The early post-war enthusiasm for racing had diminished in other nations, abetted by the postwar economic slump. Money simply wasn't available for developing new competitive designs. Even when Britain's Royal Aero Club offered a £500 (\$2500 in American money then) to a participating British team, there were no takers. Individual pilots were enthusiastic enough, but there were no backers and no available airplanes.

AIRPLANES AND PILOTS OF 1920

Italy entered four flying boats, only one of which had been designed as a racer. No matter; only one of the four made it to the starting line!

France sent one entry, but it did not qualify.

Alphabetically by airplane, the aspirants were:

MACCHI M.12: This slightly

cleaned-up version of a three-seat 1918 Italian naval reconnaissance-bomber was built by the Societa Anonima Nieuport-Macchi of Varese. The unique feature of the M.12 was a short hull that looked full length from the side because the sides were projected aft as two thin but deep booms that supported the twin tail.

This was a defensive gimmick; the rear gunner could fire downward and aft, into the usual blind spot. Power was

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