

Solar plane suspends journey in Hawaii after battery damage

By Caleb Jones
The Associated Press

HONOLULU — A team trying to fly a solar-powered plane around the world has suspended the journey in Hawai'i after the plane suffered battery damage during its record-breaking flight to the islands.

The Solar Impulse team said in a news release that it will continue the attempt to circumvent the globe, but irreversible damage caused by overheating batteries has grounded the flight until at least April.

The batteries aboard Solar Impulse 2 overheated on the first day of its trip from Japan to Hawai'i, and there was no way to cool down the system, the team said. The company says there was no weakness with the technology, but the team didn't anticipate temperature fluctuations associated with rapid altitude changes in a tropical climate.

Pilot Andre Borschberg and his single-seat aircraft landed at Kalaeloa, a small



airport outside Honolulu, on July 3. His voyage of nearly 118 hours from Nagoya, Japan, broke the record for the world's longest nonstop solo flight, according to his team.

The wings of Solar Impulse 2, which stretch wider than those of a Boeing 747,

are equipped with 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries. The plane runs on stored energy at night.

The aircraft took off in March from Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, then made stops in Oman, Myanmar, and China. It made an

BATTERY BLUES. The Solar Impulse 2, a plane powered by the sun's rays and piloted by Andre Borschberg, approaches Kalaeloa Airport near Honolulu in early July. The nearly 118-hour voyage from Nagoya, Japan broke the record for the world's longest nonstop solo flight, according to Borschberg's team. (Jean Revillard/SI2 via AP)

unplanned stop for nearly a month in Japan after high winds damaged a wing.

The trans-Pacific leg was the riskiest part of the plane's global travels, as there was nowhere for it to land in an emergency.

The plane's ideal flight speed is about 28 mph, though that can double during the day when the sun's rays are strongest. The carbon-fiber aircraft weighs more than 5,000 pounds, or about as much as a minivan or midsize truck.

The airplane will be housed in a University of Hawaii hangar at the Kalaeloa Airport on Oahu while repairs are made. The team says it will also research and test other cooling methods to prevent more overheating.

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata dies of bile duct tumor

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — Satoru Iwata, who led Japanese video game company Nintendo Co. through years of growth with its Pokémon and Super Mario franchises, has died of a bile duct tumor, according to the company. He was 55 years old.

There was an outpouring of sorrow on Twitter for Iwata as a person who carved out an entertainment legacy. Fans thanked him for childhood memories and for bringing families together.

"He didn't just create technology. He created a whole culture," said Nobuyuki Hayashi, a consultant and technology expert. "It wasn't just a consumer product that he had delivered. He brought to people something that's eternal, what people remember from when they were kids.



He was special."

Iwata, president since 2002, died at a Kyoto University hospital. He had not been seen recently at game events,

BUSINESS LEADER MOURNED. Nintendo president Satoru Iwata speaks during a news conference at a convention center in Tokyo, Japan, in this September 13, 2011 file photo. Iwata, who led the Japanese video game company through years of growth with its Pokémon and Super Mario franchises, has died of a bile duct tumor, according to the company. He was 55 years old. (AP Photo/Itsuo Inouye)

such as E3 in Los Angeles, where he was usually a participant.

Iwata led Nintendo's development into a global company, with its hit Wii home console and DS handheld, and also through its recent woes caused by the popularity of smartphones.

His replacement was not immediately announced, but the company said star game designer Shigeru Miyamoto will remain in the leadership team along with Genyo Takeda, who is also in the game development field.

Iwata had been poised to lead Nintendo through another stage after it recently did an about-face and said it will start making games for smartphones, meaning that Super Mario the plumber would soon start arriving on cellphones and tablets.

The falloff in appetite for game machines in the past few years was partly because people are increasingly playing games or doing social media and other activities on smartphones. Nintendo has repeatedly had to lower prices on gadgets to woo buyers.

Until the recent shift in strategy, company officials including Iwata had repeatedly rejected the idea of developing games for mobile devices, a market they brushed off for years as irrelevant.

In March, Nintendo announced an alliance with Japanese mobile game company DeNA Co. to develop games for mobile devices.

The company returned to profit in the fiscal year ended March 2015 after several years of losses.

Nintendo pioneered game machines since the 1980s, developing one of the first machines and the hit Game Boy handheld machine.

Its main rivals in the business are Sony Corp. with the PlayStation machines and Microsoft Corp. with the Xbox One machine. Both companies have done better in adapting to the era of online and mobile games.

Iwata succeeded Hiroshi Yamauchi, who ruled over the Kyoto-based company for half a century, transforming it from a traditional playing-card company to a technological powerhouse. Yamauchi died in 2013 at the age of 85.

Iwata was picked with Yamauchi's blessing and Yamauchi remained as an adviser for many years. Iwata had been employed at an innovative software company before he was recruited as Nintendo chief. He was tapped as president at a surprisingly young age — in his early 40s — for a Japanese company.

Iwata was a respected and popular figure in the game industry, partly because he was relatively more approachable than executives at other Japanese companies, who tend to be aloof and rigid in demeanor.

Miyamoto, the Nintendo game designer, said he was shocked and saddened.

"We will upkeep the development approach that we built with Iwata, and we in the development team hope to keep working as one to build toward the future," he said in a statement.

Iwata is survived by his wife Kayoko.



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