

UAE to participate in premier sailing race

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Abu Dhabi: The UAE will take part in the Offshore Sailing Race Across the Gulf which kicks off in Manama on February 12 and finishes in Muscat on February 27. Nine teams from six countries, including seven marinas, will cover a distance of more than 1,400km. The announcement was made yesterday at a press conference held at the Abu Dhabi Sailing and Yachting Club (ADSYC). Mohammad Al Eisa, regional PR director of Oman Sail (the main organisers), Majid Al Muhairi, director general of ADSYC, and Philippe Sa'ad, managing director of Eden Yachting (one of the sponsors), were present at the announcement.

"Last year, we organised the first version of the race and six teams took part. It achieved great success as sailing represents a huge part of the heritage and culture of the Gulf countries," Al Eisa said. "We chose this season because there are no sailing races held in Europe during the winter. We aim to attract top sailors for our race. One of the best French teams is taking part in this race."

Team Ras Al Khaimah, led by skipper John Curran, will represent the UAE together with Team Commercialbank Group of Qatar, BAE Systems from Oman, Team Renaissance from Oman, Team Al Thuraya from Oman — (featuring a number of women sailors) will be led by record-setting skipper Dee Caffari who has completed three trips around the world on her own — Team Muscat 2012, Team Bahrain, Team Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Team Courier Dunkerque from France.

Change in crew

"Each boat, of category Farr 30, will be led by seven sailors, including the skipper. The crew will be changed every four hours. There are some long distances, especially from Doha to Abu Dhabi which might take three days," Al Eisa said. "The seven marinas where the sailors will make stopovers are Manama, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah, Musandam, Mussanah and Muscat," Al Muhairi explained.

"The race offers good marketing opportunities to sponsors as it stops in four countries and helps to promote trade and tourism," Al Eisa added.

"We have not yet announced the prizes for the winners of each of the six rounds of the race and the overall standings but we will decide on that soon."

Both Al Muhairi and Sa'ad expressed their pleasure in being associated with this event in particular as it reflects a rich part of the region's heritage and culture and helps youngsters participate in the sport and gain experience by competing against leading international sailors.

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