

"Poker Faces" for Friday's Qualifying Starting in Doha!

DOHA, Qatar – March 3, 2011 – The paddock has been put into place for less than 36 hours and already the strategy is starting. New drivers and new teams have been jockeying into position filled with a lot of talk and mystery for the opening round of the U.I.M. F1 H2O World Championship for powerboating at the Ninth Grand Prix of Qatar in Doha Bay.

The start of the weekends competition begins on Friday with a one hour "knockout" qualifying session to determine the starting positions for Saturday's Grand Prix. For many teams the faces have changed and everyone is eyeing it's competition keeping strategy close to the vest in order they don't give away any secrets for weekend strategy.

The qualifying mark set on Doha Bay for the Grand Prix of Qatar was set last year by home team driver **Jay Price** who went on to win the race from pole position with a time of 44.42 seconds and a 170.19 kph (105.51 mph).

"We had a magical weekend a year ago and would love to duplicate again this season," said the American. "The **Qatar** team has been busy testing this past week and we feel we have all the kinks out and are ready to go. My new teammate **Alex Carella** has added a lot already and we should push each other which is a must if we are going to chase the team and drivers championships."

Next door on paddock row is the winning team that won both of these championships in 2010 courtesy of **Sami Selio** as the Finnish star from Helsinki steered the **Mad Croc** effort to the championship at last years final round in Sharjah in the UAE.

"We have all our boys back from last year and have added **Davide Padovan** from Italy as a second driver who was runner-up to rookie-of-the-year in 2010 and will really add a lot to the organization," said Sami. "I have a pole here in 2009 and am looking for my first victory here on Doha Bay this Saturday."

Team Abu Dhabi earned a pole position in 2007 when **Thani Al Qamzi** took both the pole and the victory in his pocket that weekend. His younger teammate **Ahmed Al Hameli** won the qualifying award last season with the best results throughout the season and at the same time is looking for his first pole position.

Jonas Andersson of the new **Team Sweden** effort earned a pole position which carried him to his 2008 victory in Doha one of his four career wins. Joining him this season will be the much talked about newcomer **Shaun Torrente** of Miami, Florida who like his fellow countryman **Scott Gillman** back in 1997 came to the series with back to back North American titles. Gillman went on to win the World Championship on his first try and Shaun will be hoping to do the same this year.

The major difference this time around is that Scott brought over his own Seebold boat from America that won the two titles while Shaun is being introduced to a new boat he has no time in. This should make the drama that much more exciting.

Drivers from ten different nations will be ready for tomorrow's 15:00 local time (12:00 GMT) one hour qualifying session that will determine the starting grid and pole position for Saturday's Ninth Grand Prix of Qatar and the opening session for the 2011 U.I.M. F1 H2O World Championship. The qualifying session can be viewed "live" worldwide on the official website www.f1h2o.com.

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