

Kiev Could Be Key Event For Many Drivers Title Hopes!

ABU DHABI, UAE, Monday, July 25, 2011 – For some experts this maybe a bit premature, but as the UIM F1 H2O World Championship for power boating heads to the city of Vyshgorod in the Kiev region, next weekend for the first Grand Prix of Ukraine on the 29th and 30th of July, many drivers on the tour maybe seeing their last solid chance of becoming World Champion in 2011 become a reality or just go up in smoke.

The reason for all this desperation in some race camps is that four drivers from three separate teams look like they are running away from the pack and have a clear lane ahead in their drive for a title this 31st year of the championship series.

The one organization that is flying high with both of their drivers having won each of the three races this season and reaching the podium at each Grand Prix is **Qatar Team**. Led by veteran American driver **Jay Price**, who has won two beginning with his home event back in March in Doha and again two months later in Portimao, Portugal in late May and most recently coming from 15th place to take a third in Kazan last weekend.

His teammate, young Italian **Alex Carella** in only his second year of racing F1 powerboats, has closed the points championship to within two (52-50) with runner-up finishes to Price at both Doha and Portimao but winning from pole position last week in Kazan, narrowing the gap and earning his second victory in just 11 career starts.

While these two have almost toyed with the competition thus far, **Team Abu Dhabi**, who has proven over the years to be one of the racing elite organizations, has **Thani Al Qamzi** coming home with two straight podium finishes and staying close to the two Qatar Team drivers after three rounds, scoring 31 points. Thani's teammate **Ahmed Al Hameli**, who many looked at as a possible World Champion candidate this season, has struggled with no points, topped of with a one race suspension by the UIM officials after his erratic driving at the Grand Prix of Portugal was deemed dangerous.

Four-time World Champion and Team Manager **Scott Gillman** came out of a four year retirement to drive for Ahmed in Kazan and did well considering he was a "bit rusty" with a fourth place finish and earning the team valuable points in the Team Championship. Scott will turn the number six boat back to Ahmed in Kiev.

While most of the notoriety and attention has gone the way of the Qatar and Abu Dhabi camps, **Philippe Chiappe** has guided the **CTIC China Team** to the podium once this year and if not receiving a penalty for taking out a buoy in Portugal, would have three straight top five finishes. The Frenchman has earned 21 points and is going to need to win however to have any shot at the leaders something he's failed to do in 71 starts.

Three time runner-up in the championship and fifth all-time race winner **Francesco Cantando** has three top-10 results including a fifth place best in Portimao leading his **Singha Team** with 12 points and fifth in the title chase. The driver from Milan who hasn't won in his last five starts will have to start finding the magic in this event if he wants any hope of capturing his first title.

Team Sweden has been one of the most exciting and dynamic to watch so far this season with veteran driver **Jonas Andersson** delivering a nice fifth place at the opener in Doha but struggling to find the groove with a failure to finish in Portugal followed by a practice crash of his new boat at home in Sweden followed by a crash in Kazan with a lot of work ahead as the move to Kiev this next week.

Rookie teammate **Shaun Torrente** of Miami, Florida has put together eye opening performances with a nice fourth place finish in his first ever event in Doha, followed by a crash as he chased the lead of the race with pole sitter **Marit Stromoy** in Portimao followed up with a second starting spot off the dock with dreams of a podium finish disappearing when he and his boat separated on the back right hand straight midway thru the last event ending in another wild conclusion. The two-time North American champion will be back into his backup DAC in Kiev.

Meanwhile, defending World Champion **Sami Selio** of Finland in his **Mac Croc** machine just can't get into the groove with two failures to finish and a fourth place result in Portugal being the only bright spot of a slow starting 2011 campaign for the number one boat. Teammate **Davide Padovan** is starting show

signs of being someone special with a pair of sixth's followed up with a shortened DNF in Kazan to slow his progress.

Norwegian driver **Marit Stromoy** of **Team Nautica**, who has really come into her own this season, earning pole position in Portugal and becoming the first women in major motor sports history to earn such a designation, continues to impress coming off a solid sixth after qualifying 14th in Kazan in her new BABA boat.

Overall, the first Grand Prix event in the Kiev region in the city of Vyshgorod , will mark an important step in this years UIM F1 H2O Championship. If the Qatar Team falters, it can open the door of fresh hope and closer numbers to other teams and their drivers. If not, well, it could be a four driver race all the way to Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates in December.

The first Grand Prix of Ukraine on the Kiev Sea will begin with a one hour Qualifying battle for pole and the remaining field of drivers at 18:00 local, 15:00 GMT and 11:00 Eastern Daylight Time in North America.

Saturday's Grand Prix on the 30th of July will take place at the same time of 18:00 local, 15:00 GMT and 11:00 EDT. Both Grand Prix of Ukraine Qualifying and the Grand Prix can be watched and followed live by going to the official website at www.f1h2o.com.

As an added bonus on July 31st, as part of the Grand Prix of Ukraine F1 H2O World Championship will be held a special "match race" for the "Cup of the President" of Ukraine beginning at 09:00 local and ending around 12:00.

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