

Carella Gives Team Abu Dhabi Their First Pole In 10 Years!

ABU DHABI (UAE) - Thursday, 10 December, 2015 - Three-time World Champion Alex Carella pushed his new DAC boat to the limit on an ever changing wind swept 2.06 kilometer (1.27 mile) circuit earning his hometown *Team Abu Dhabi* organization their first pole position in a decade lining himself up for his first possible victory of the season for tomorrow's 24th Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi on the edge of the Gulf in downtown Abu Dhabi.

The race, which has been an anchor event on the UIM F1 H2O World Championship tour since 1993 featured 17 drivers from 11 different nations fighting for pole position along the corniche in front of a large crowd of race fans on an ever increasing windy late afternoon.

The 30 year-old driver who joined the Abu Dhabi team back in February has struggled most of the year with only one podium finish with a third in Porto, Portugal in August. Now, he's caught up in a three way battle for seventh in the drivers championship with 19 points and a long shot for this years drivers championship with just two races left to be run.

Carella, who was fourth quickest going into the final Q3 top-six "shootout", came out and was the only driver to run a sub-46 second lap with a spectacular 45.86 second time and a 157.00 Kph lap around the six-pin circuit.

"I am really happy with the new boat and it was really confidence inducing despite the ever increasing wind conditions forcing us to be very careful around the strong crosswinds between turns five and six leading to the front straightaway," said Alex.

"Now tomorrow I just have to get a great start and focus at the job at hand and hopefully earn my 11 career victory and see where this leads us going into next weeks final event in Sharjah."

Chasing him to the end and looking for his sixth pole in Abu Dhabi was two-time World Champion Sami Selio of Finland who was quickest in Q2 and came out last for a shot at his second pole position of the year. The 40 year-old driver with the *Mad Croc Baba Team* came up short 1.13 seconds back of Carella with a 46.99 second lap falling just short of gaining his 24th career pole and will start second off the dock tomorrow afternoon for the fifth round of the championship.

"We did our best but the conditions had to have been the worst when we came out last," said Sami. "Tomorrow is another day and we'll give it our best on the start and look for a shot at the lead before the first turning pin at the start of tomorrow's event."

Starting third is the current points leader and reigning World Champion Philippe Chiappe of France as the *CTIC China Team* pilot had an electrical trim problem forcing him to run a less than ideal situation. He despite this did a fabulous job with a 47.33 second lap being 1.47 seconds back of Carella in the end.

"We had the misfortune having the problem but the good news is that we don't have to win to continue our chance to win our second title like some fellow pilots have too," said Philippe. "We'll push for the victory and we want to be in a great position to force our competition to place it all on the line in order to beat us this year."

With Chiappe holding down his sixteen point margin with 55 points and only 40 points up for grabs for the final two events his closest pursuer Shaun Torrente had to settle for eighth place as the driver from Florida piloting for the *Victory Team* has 39 points. Shaun must pull off a minor miracle for his shot at his first title before the season comes to an end next Friday in Sharjah.

Fourth fastest was Kuwaiti driver Youssef Al-Rubayan as the *F1 Atlantic Team* driver was 1.61 seconds behind with a 47.47 second lap making his fourth "shootout" appearance in five races this season. His 36 points has him in third in the championship 19 points back of Chiappe and still in the picture for his first title run.

Swedish driver Jonas Andersson, in his *Team Sweden* Malgaard boat, was second quickest in the Q2 session and came out second to last for a shot at pole only to have his engine struggle with fuel. The driver from Fruvi stopped on the circuit before he could put his first of two expected laps for the driver fourth in the championship with 29 points.

Fifth, was local driver Ahmed Al Hameli of the *Emirates Team*, as the driver from Abu Dhabi pushed hard in his short boat to make a statement as he chased his first pole in Abu Dhabi and his 10th of his career finishing with a 48.94 second run for a 147.12 Kph speed for four-time World Champion Scott Gillman's team.

Speaking of the native from California, Gillman, was the last driver from *Team Abu Dhabi* to earn a pole position back in 2005 later going on to victory the next day now he'll be pushing against his rival and old team. Alex Carella can only hope to do the same tomorrow.

The 24th Grand Prix of Abu Dhabi and the fifth stop on the 2015 UIM F1 H2O World Championship for powerboating will take place on Friday afternoon at 15:30 local (11:30 UTC) and 06:30 on the East Coast of North America with 17 drivers from 11 different nations ready to take the challenge of the fast and exciting six-pin 2.06 kilometer race circuit.

The race can be followed by going to the official website of the tour at www.f1h2o.com. "Live" play-by-play broadcasting is made available via the worldwide television broadcast feed on the site as well.