Ben Saunders to Join Musandam-Oman Sail for 2015 Artemis Challenge

Monday 10 August, 2015

English explorer Ben Saunders joins Serge Betsen to form a celebrity 'express' crew that according to Musandam-Oman Sail skipper Sidney Gavignet is likely to prove both inspirational to the young Omani crew on board and extremely fast. On Thursday 13 August , the Sultanate of Oman's flagship, Musandam-Oman Sail, will line up against a fleet of sailing thoroughbreds with ten IMOCA 60s, two Volvo 65s and three other multihulls in contention for the title.

"Ben has all the characteristics that I find inspiring and hope that our Omani crewmembers will also be inspired by him," said Gavignet. "These guys just never give up. They fight hard but they are also humble. These are fantastic qualities and values that we all need in our jobs."

Saunders, the world-leading polar explorer and a record-breaking long-distance skier has little experience racing on high speed trimarans. "It will be my first time on one of these boats but it will be an exhilarating test of stamina, strength and fitness and I am extremely excited to be competing with some of the biggest names in offshore ocean racing," he said. "As a polar explorer, I have a strong passion for the outdoors and enjoy setting myself new challenges, pushing myself both mentally and physically beyond the limits of the impossible."

All 16 boats will be aiming for line honours and if the right breezy conditions prevail, for a new Artemis Challenge record which for multihulls is 2 hours, 21 minutes and 25 seconds set by Foncia in 2012 and for monohulls, 3 hours 43 minutes and 50 seconds set by Leopard in 2013. "We are entering this race to try to win it," said Gavignet. "We finished just behind Foncia in 2012 which was frustrating so this is a great opportunity to attempt to add another record to the Sultanate of Oman's growing collection."

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For more information on the Sultanate of Oman please contact:

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Note to Editors
Oman Sail is a national initiative established in 2008 that uses the power of sport to contribute to the development of the Omani people. The equal opportunity project runs sailing programmes for thousands of young Omani men and women, inspiring a new generation to discover sailing. It encompasses a national sailing squad and high achieving inshore and offshore racing teams, all of which benefit from world-class coaching and whose ultimate objective is to win an Olympic medal for Oman. The programme aims to build seven sailing schools around the country, four of which are already operational. The goal is to rekindle Oman's maritime heritage while raising the country's regional and international profile as a high-end tourist and foreign investment destination, through competitive sailing at home and abroad. Oman Sail seeks to instil confidence and to teach valuable, transferable life skills to a generation of Omanis.

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