

## ABRA to Crown 2009 World Champion in Doha, Qatar

Doha, Qatar - The American Boat Racing Association (ABRA) and the Qatar Marine Sports Federation (QMSF) have agreed to have the final race of the 2009 ABRA unlimited hydroplane season in Doha, Qatar. Ten of the fastest racing boats in the world will travel here next November for the inaugural Oryx Cup event --the ABRA World Championship -- as a result of an Agreement in Principle reached January 9 between the ABRA and the QMSF.

The race date is among the items being finalized. It will be held in November (third or fourth weekend) and serve as the last stop on the 2009 series which begins on the Fourth of July weekend in Madison, Ind.

QMSF President Sheikh Hassan Bin Jabor Al Thani and ABRA Chairman Sam Cole reached the agreement that will take ABRA teams abroad for the first time in the sport's history to compete for the World Championship.

{gallery}galleries/misc/qatar{/gallery} Images from Sam Cole and Ken Muscatel's onsite visit in Doha, Qatar. Click on the image above to begin a slideshow. Link to eight video clips taken from the middle of the proposed racecourse in Doha.

"We are very pleased to make this announcement," Al Thani said. "There are some details to finalize in the next few weeks, but we look forward to hosting the ABRA and its teams here in Qatar."

"We have agreed to host the World Championship for three years," he added. "Together with the QMSF, we want to create the premier Unlimited Hydroplane race in the world."

Cole and Dr. Ken Muscatel, ABRA Vice Chairman, Driver and Team Owner, traveled to Doha for the historic meeting and viewed the race site and facilities.

"I can hardly wait to run my boat on this course," Muscatel said. "The location of this race is impressive and the water looks to be ideal for our boats. The speeds will be fast."

The race will be run on a 2.5 mile course on Qatar Bay running parallel with the city's downtown skyline in the background. The Qatar Marine Sports Federation hosts Class 1 Offshore, Formula 1 and Formula 2000 tunnel boat events annually and campaigns racing teams in those categories in International competition.

"The Qatar Marine Sports Federation understands how to host a world class event," Cole stated. "Sheikh Hassan and his team understand boat racing, and everything they do is first class. "We have a lot of preparation and planning work to do," Cole added. "This is a first step towards making our sport a global entity and we were very proud of the confidence and commitment Sheikh Hassan has shown in our sport."

The Qatar Marine Sports Federation was founded in January 2000. Its vision is to be the leader and primary organizer for all water sports events and host world class competitions. Additional QMSF events include Jet Ski racing, Dhow sailing, wakeboarding, water ski competition and pleasure craft racing.

The ABRA has truly taken on an international flavor in 2009 with an exhibition race in Kelowna BC, Canada and now Doha, the capital city of Qatar with a population of more than 1.3 million residents. Doha is the largest city in Qatar, located halfway up the country's eastern peninsula, facing the United Arab Emirates.

"We have no doubt this event could change the way the sponsors and supporters of unlimited hydroplane racing view our sport," Cole said. "Ken and I were so impressed with the people, the city and this country; we can't wait to bring unlimited hydroplane racing to their country."

The ABRA is the worldwide sanctioning organization for Unlimited Hydroplanes.