

## Yas Marina Circuit Officially Opens World-Class Drag Racing Centre Ahead of March 19-20 Drag Racing Festival

### *His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan Sends the First Cars Down the Track*

Abu Dhabi, UAE (7 Mar., 2010) – His Highness Sheikh Khaled bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Vice Chairman-Etihad Airways, today officially opened Yas Marina's Circuit's world-class Drag Racing Centre when he activated the timing system for the first time as two Abu Dhabi Police cars accelerated down the Drag Strip.

HE Staff Major General Obaid Al Kitbi, Deputy Commander of the Abu Dhabi Police, was also present at the event, which involved a display of various drag cars owned by local UAE racing teams.

The permanent home for some of the fastest vehicles on the planet, throughout the year the Yas Drag Racing Centre will host local and international drag racing events as well as provide drag racing training and qualifications. The first event - the Yas Drag Racing Festival – will take place from 19-20 March, 2010. Tickets go on sale on 8 March.

Richard Cregan, CEO Yas Marina Circuit, said: "His Highness' presence here today signifies just how important this facility is to the sport of drag racing in the region. This new world class sporting facility will provide the motorsports enthusiasts in the UAE and the region – especially young people - with an opportunity to exert their passion for drag racing within a safe and controlled environment."

"We are delighted that the Abu Dhabi Police are part of this inaugural event. They have been extremely supportive in our quest to continuously promote fun, yet safe driving experiences within the boundaries of our best-in-class facilities."

The NHRA, the governing body for drag racing in the United States, has recognised the Yas Drag Racing Centre as the first track outside the USA as an NHRA worldwide racing network. Situated adjacent to the circuit's Formula 1 track, the centre has two grandstands with a seating capacity of 5,000 and houses its own race control, hospitality and paddock area.

In January this year, Yas Marina Circuit partnered with American team Don Schumacher Racing (DSR), winner of eight National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) championships and 136 races, to provide two complete Top Fuel dragster teams to be based in Abu Dhabi.

The two nitro burning Top Fuel dragsters will debut at the inaugural Drag Racing Festival and will be driven by nine-time NHRA winner Tommy Johnson, Jr., and 2007 Top Fuel Vice Champion Rod 'Hot Rod' Fuller. A Top Fuel Dragster has 8000 horsepower and can accelerate from zero to over 480 kph in less than four seconds.

The 'invitation only' Drag Racing Festival will also feature the region's top drag race teams competing with over 100 race cars and motorcycles in a variety of race categories led by the Pro Mods - highly modified vehicles with close to 1700 horsepower.

To purchase a ticket, please visit any of the following: Virgin Megastore outlets, Cinestar cinemas, Marina Mall Abu Dhabi, [www.yasmarinacircuit.ae](http://www.yasmarinacircuit.ae) or call 800 YAS (927).

For more information, visit [www.yasmarinacircuit.ae](http://www.yasmarinacircuit.ae) or call 800 YAS (927).

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شركة أبوظبي لإدارة رياضة السيارات  
ص.ب. 13001  
أبوظبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة  
هاتف: 800 888 888 (+971)  
فاكس: 777 4100 2 (+971)

Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management  
P.O. Box 130001  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
Tel: +971 (0) 2 4100 888  
Fax: +971 (0) 2 4100 777

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

### **Paul Quinn, International Media Manager, Yas Marina Circuit**

Tel: +971 (0) 2 4100 824 Mobile: +971 (0) 50 584 0950

Email: [paul.quinn@eaa.gov.ae](mailto:paul.quinn@eaa.gov.ae)

### **Kawthar Bin Sulayem, Local Media Manager, Yas Marina Circuit**

Tel: +971 (0) 2 4100 862 Mobile: +971 (0) 50 358 8220

Email: [kawthar.binsulayem@eaa.gov.ae](mailto:kawthar.binsulayem@eaa.gov.ae)

## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

Did you know? The Yas Drag Racing Centre:

- Is today the only recognised track outside the USA as an NHRA worldwide racing network
- Has the only 'all concrete' quarter-mile in the Middle East
- Is home to the two of the top drag racing drivers in the world, Rod 'Hot Rod' Fuller and Tommy Johnston Jr.
  - Rod 'Hot Rod' Fuller will be a driving instructor in the Yas Drag Racing School
- Will house some of the fastest vehicles on the planet; they include
  - Two Top Fuel Dragsters- the ONLY Top Fuel dragsters in the Middle-East
  - Four Super Comp dragsters. These are similar to the Top Fuel Dragsters, only they sport a smaller engine of just 1000 horsepower
  - Six 2010 427 horsepower Camaros
  - One 3-seater dragster, giving enthusiasts the opportunity to take a ride in one of these incredible cars driven by one of the Yas Drag Racing Centre's experienced race instructors

