



For Immediate Press Release

Dubai, 25th February 2008:

Fourth edition of Maktoum Sailing gets under way at Mina Seyahi

Australian boat Ichi Ban skippered by Matt Allen and Marcus Wieser-skippered Westin Mina Seyahi drew first blood in the top two divisions on the opening day of the 4th Maktoum Sailing Trophy off the Mina Seyahi waters at Dubai International Marine Club (DIMC).

Led by the inspirational Matt Allen, the Aussies from the CYCA were in a class of its own as they left the remaining 11 boats to finish first in both the races held yesterday.

After a rather dull morning, winds started picking up to between 10 and 12 knots early in the afternoon, and the boats could well see themselves poised for some ideal sailing conditions.

And with Allen deftly making his experience count, much of the action was concentrated in the Division 2 competition with the two boats from Dubai hogging the limelight.

There was plenty of action on the waters with the Westin Mina Seyahi and Le Meridien boats vying with each other for the top spot. But in the end, it was the combined knack of Wieser – a member of Team Germany at last year's America's Cup in Valencia – and local lad Sultan Hareb coming on top in both the races in the end.

There was no dearth of action as both boats came up with some top quality sailing, with Westin edging past Le Meridien.

"I have seen so much of sailing but this one definitely can be compared to a World Cup rugby final," blurted Sid Bensalah, Race Department Director and Regatta Chairman at Mina Seyahi Dubai.

"Racing was so close all the time between these two boats throughout the two rounds," he added.

"This has been a truly fantastic day for sailing. To have such quality in the field and now in the standard of sailing shows that we are headed in the right direction for this sport," stated Saeed Hareb, Managing Director and CEO Mina Seyahi Dubai.

In Division 3, it was Dubai-based Christophe Vanek of DuBoats showing his class by taking the top spot at the end of the first day in North Star.

The event is being held under the patronage of Shaikh Mayed Bin Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

The Maktoum Sailing Trophy is sponsored by Emirates Airline, AGMC BMW, Le Meridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort and Marina, The Westin Dubai and Marine Pool.

Results:

Division 1: Ichi Ban (Matt Allen)

Division 2: Westin Mina Seyahi (Marcus Wieser)

Division 3: North Star (Christophe Vanek)

