

Paris, February 22th 2024

2024 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge
FIA-FIM WORLD RALLY-RAID CHAMPIONSHIP
A TRIBUTE TO THE PIONEERS

Key points:

- **3 days to go until the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge (ADDC), scheduled for 25 February to 2 March, will double as the second round of the 2024 W2RC season for the third time in a row.**
- **The 33rd edition of the ADDC marks its 31st consecutive appearance on the FIA world calendar and its 28th on the FIM one, cementing its status as the longest-standing event on the roster.**
- **Emirates Motorsports Organization (EMSO), the organiser of the rally, has planned three bivouacs. The capital, Abu Dhabi, will again host the start and the finish. Al Dhannah, in the western reaches of the country, will be the first host city in Al Dhafra Region, while the southern town of Mezaira'a, the cradle of the Emirates and gateway to Rub' Al Khali Desert, is an eye-catching addition.**
- **1,902 kilometres of racing await the entrants, whose names will be revealed when the start list comes out later this week. 1,179 kilometres of specials will sort the best from the rest.**

A ROUTE THAT GOES BACK TO BASICS

The all-time greats of rally raids have all added their names to the honour roll of the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, the longest-standing event on the FIA-FIM world calendars: Schlessler, Vatanen, Peterhansel (the event record holder on four wheels, with seven victories to his name), Masuoka and Roma in the car race, and Kinigadner, "Peter" again, Meoni, Despres, Coma (the event record holder on two wheels, with eight victories, including a five-win streak from 2009 through 2013), Price and Sunderland in the motorbike race, to name but a few. It is a rite of passage for any self-respecting rally-raid competitor.

The race has been on the cutting edge of innovation since 1991, but this year's ADDC is going back to basics. In the 33rd edition, the hundred vehicles slated to make up the caravan will return to Liwa Oasis, 200 kilometres south of the capital. It is the cradle of the Bani Yas, the biggest tribe in the Emirates, which conquered and founded Abu Dhabi, after decades of date-growing, camel and sheep husbandry and seasonal pearl farming.

The organiser, EMSO, has concocted a route that will take the entrants to the heart of the centuries-old culture of the country's founders. Liwa Oasis lies on the northern border of the country, not far from Tal Moreeb, the tallest dune on Earth, which peaks at almost 300 metres and has a 50-degree gradient!

After two nights east of Abu Dhabi in Al Dhannah City, which made its debut in 2023, the caravan will wrap up the second special at the foot of Moreeb Dune before setting up camp in Mezaira'a for three nights. It will be its first visit to Mezair'a since 2002.

The field will be plunged into the quintessential desert culture, and those in the know will extend the experience and share it with their families in the desert, on the beach and at cultural and architectural landmarks.

A TOUGHER PROGRAMME WITH MORE NAVIGATION

Stretching for a total of 1,902 kilometres, with 1,179 kilometres of selective sections, the 2024 edition is kicking the difficulty up a notch, in part due to the more varied terrain, but also due to the navigation, in keeping with the new style that the W2RC introduced in the Moroccan finale last October and continued in the Dakar. There will be fewer waypoints in the road book, forcing riders and co-drivers to think long and hard before making a decision. Sometimes, they will only find out whether they were right or wrong a few boxes down the page. Just like the route, the road book is also going back to basics.

Khalid Bin Sulayem, EMSO's President:

"We are looking forward to welcoming the second round of the FIA-FIM World Rally-Raid Championship back to the UAE for a third consecutive year. More than anything, we are delighted that the route, in its path

through the Liwa Oasis, will bring us to Mezaira'a again after a 22-year absence. This area is rich in local culture and was visited often by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE, who loved its natural beauty and its historical sites."

25 February: administrative, pre-race press conference, general briefing (Energy Center) and technical scrutineering (Nation Towers) in Abu Dhabi.

26 February: transfer to Al Dhannah and ADNOC Oasis prologue (total: 19 km — prologue: 5 km)

27 February - stage 1: Ruler's Representative Court in Al Dhafrah Region — starting and finishing in Al Dhannah (total: 374 km / special: 248 km). The stage, held in the dunes, will throw the competitors in at the deep end.

28 February - stage 2: ADNOC Distribution — from Al Dhannah to Mezaira'a (total: 327 km / special: 239 km). The first hearty serving of sand mountains will come before the rally skirts the border with Saudi Arabia and alternates dunes and *chotts* —the signature trait of the Rub' Al Khali.

29 February - stage 3: Abu Dhabi Sports Council — loop around Mezaira'a (total: 414 km / special: 251 km). A few tracks will emerge from an ocean of sand.

1 March - stage 4: Al Futtaim-Toyota — another loop around Mezaira'a (total: 345 km / special: 231 km). A one-two punch comparable to stage 2.

2 March - stage 5: Abu Dhabi Aviation — from Mezaira'a to Abu Dhabi (total: 423 km / special: 205 km). The finale will be no time for relaxation. Navigation could throw one or two curveballs at the competitors in the dunes, shaking up the ranking in the closing stage. The award ceremony will take place at the Energy Center shortly afterwards.

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Official Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge [here](#).

PRESS CONTACTS

W2RC

w2rc@aso.fr

FIM

Isabelle Larivière

isabelle.lariviere@fim.ch

FIA

press@fia.com