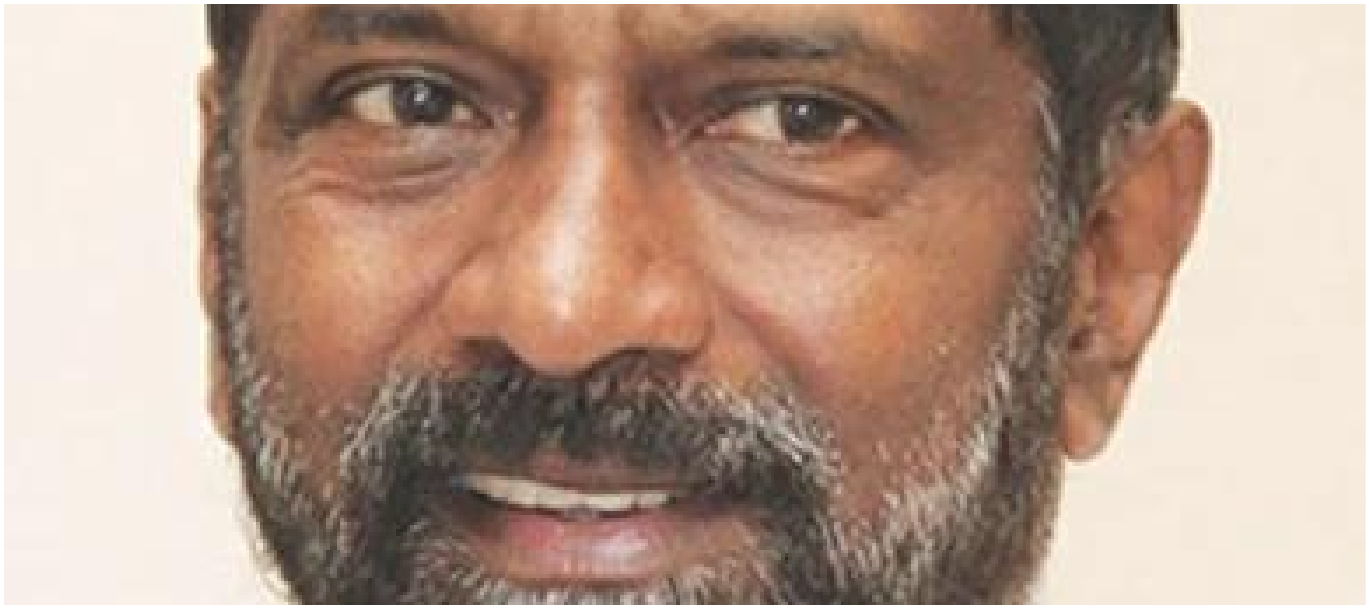


Power Boating: A Need For Speed



Aquatic sports are becoming increasingly popular in Sri Lanka with the growth of the tourism industry. The Island’s coastal belt, which includes beaches and the surrounding ocean facilitates the performance of a range of aquatic sports such as surfing and jet skiing throughout the year. This thereby qualifies the country as a fine destination to promote sport tourism. Looking at these multiple prospects, The Lanka Powerboat Association was established with the aim of providing a range of new opportunities that Sri Lanka can capitalise on, as it becomes a maritime and tourism hub.

The Lanka Powerboat Association founded in 2011 is dedicated to establishing the

sport of Powerboating in Sri Lanka. The Association aims to enrol Sri Lanka in Formula 1 and 2 Grand Priz Championships in the coming years bringing this exhilarating, spectacular international sport to Sri Lanka. It is taking necessary steps to establish Sri Lanka both as a prime destination for powerboat enthusiasts to visit for training, licencing and competition and also as a fully equipped destination for our own teams to develop to the highest international capability.

Prassane Ranaweera, President of the Association has been instrumental in its establishment, he is passionate about powerboating, he believes that this island paradise is the ideal location for this high level, exciting sport to flourish. Drivers and spectators alike can benefit from the accolade of having this sport to watch, participate in and share with the international community. He also believes that this high profile sport allows Sri Lankan companies the ideal opportunity to be represented on an international platform .

He also believes that there is a huge talent and enthusiasm to ensure that Sri Lanka will be able to excel in this sport and make its name globally as a centre for powerboat excellence in the future. The Association aims to provide training, guidance and support to potential clubs and the infrastructure to enable the Sri Lankan community to obtain a licence to compete and enjoy this sport at the highest levels. The sport promotes a range of categories from the GT15 boats for nine year olds to the F1 and F2 boats that compete in the Grand Priz tournaments. The Association has been working with interested parties to begin building these boats and the moulds are here in Sri Lanka providing the potential for our Island to become a lead in design and manufacture.

There is no doubt that the ambition to promote Sri Lanka as a powerboat destination has the potential to go a long way to becoming a very lucrative revenue earner for the country, a sporting platform in which business can be conducted and also an accolade in Sri Lanka’s journey towards the vision of the country becoming a maritime hub.

The Powerboat Association aims to play a part in both the tourism and leisure industries, encouraging enthusiasts to travel here to compete and to obtain their international licence whilst enjoying an ideallic holiday in the sun. It will add to

maritime activities offering a range of boating experiences and opportunities to compete at varying levels. “As such it will promote Sri Lanka as a high end sports tourism hub”, reveals Admiral Jayanath Colombage, former Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy and Patron of the Lanka Power Association. ‘Though new to Sri Lanka, this sport has a great International significance and hosting iconic events such as Formula 1 will help to capture the attention of the world, appealing to their need for speed.”

Sri Lanka became the 57th country to become part of the UIM (Union International Motonautique-the governing body for powerboating worldwide) based in Monaco. The UIM issue stringent guidelines to ensure that the sport is conducted with the utmost safety and with respect given to the surrounding environment. The Lanka Powerboat Association has its infrastructure in place to ensure that the sport here in Sri Lanka follows these guidelines assuring the safety and protection of all parties involved, drivers, organising/supporting crew, spectators and the environment, both on land and water where defined measures minimise water, air and noise pollution. In addition the five pillars of ethics followed by the powerboating world ensure the integrity of all its members and safeguards the acclaim accorded the sport.

Sharing his views about Sri Lanka and the suitability of the country for hosting power-boat events Nicolo di San Germano, UIM F1 Promoter and director of F1H2O racing said, “I have been to Sri Lanka several times in the past few years. It is a paradise surrounded by perfect waters. I am looking forward to having an event in the country”.

Pam Manion, who plays a supporting role in introducing the sport to Sri Lanka, sees the inception of the Lanka Power boating Association as a win-win situation, as the country is now equipped with the infrastructure, the capacity and most importantly the enthusiasm to take on an international water sport and in turn Sri Lanka is the perfect destination for athletes to come from all around the world to compete at international standards all year round.

She also stressed that the UIM is able to promote Sri Lanka as a perfect location for powerboating and races here, can be added to the international calendar promoting this country as a high calibre destination capable of hosting high end sports. She

also mentioned that many people have become involved in helping to see this sport develop in Sri Lanka, all of whom are able to offer high levels of skills to ensure that the standards expected are met. Nishantha Wijesinghe is a good example of this, supporting the recent display held on the Beira lake in which he donned the cap of ‘commodore’ working with a team of British pilots running the first exposure of powerboating in November 2013 hereby showcasing the support the Association is receiving from many quarters of society.

Elaborating on the advantages that Sri Lanka presents for the sport, Prassane Ranaweera affirmed,” Sri Lanka is indeed the ideal location for powerboating for many reasons, but importantly the climate conditions ensure opportunities all year around. During the North East monsoon, racing can be performed on the South West coast and vice versa. For Formula 1 and 2 circuit racing, calm seas are a pre-requisite as such, having the opportunity to race all year round somewhere on the island is a big boon that Sri Lanka can offer. There are many other categories of races that the Association will also be promoting on the open sea such as Class 1 and P750 boats where although the water need not be calm, in fact the reverse, for the viewing public it will be ideal to offer excellent weather in which to spectate, a big draw to tourists and powerboat enthusiasts worldwide. This will place Sri Lanka in a far more prestigious position than in Europe where they welcome boats only during the period of March to September”

Powerboating requires each of its member countries to provide a standard set of infrastructure as well as the facility to allow drivers the ability to acquire a licence to participate in local and international championships. The Lanka Powerboat Association have concentrated their efforts in establishing this framework and are now ready to go to the next stage and welcome local drivers and enthusiasts from around the world to obtain their training and licences here. The process is relatively simple and each driver takes a test to renew their license annually. Licences ensure that each driver is recognised as trained to a standard that enables them to control and drive a boat with safety, exit a submerged boat with ease and speed and show that they have full understanding of the five pillars of ethics that direct the sport. Drivers who show aptitude and skill can also work towards taking part in the World Championships in which they will be required to hold a super licence showing that they have participated in at least six national races and have passed a UIM safety test. The Lanka Powerboat Association has strong links with the British squad and

Powerboating National Authority in the UK and is able to offer training at the highest level to interested parties to become skilled drivers and powerboat trainers themselves in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile with UK trainers on hand and selected supporters who have already been trained the Association are now geared up and ready to promote Sri Lanka in its mission to become a maritime hub.

With safety always being of paramount importance the safety team in any international race also have to be of the highest level of skill and training. Osprey are the recognised authority as rescue support in any international race in the world. The Lanka Powerboat Association with its UK links, are on board to provide their trained personal to support events in the country. These well-trained specialised teams have developed their own rescue equipment such as ‘drop down flap’ on the rescue boats to hoist the injured in a horizontal position and a flotation device to be used in the water in their rescue missions.

Prassane Ranaweera said, “the beauty of the sport is that it is on water and requires little infrastructure unlike when races are organised on land. Further unlike in the rallies where spectators sit close to the road during road races, the boats have a hundred and fifty metre safety zone distance between them and spectators ensuring no danger to the audience.

Powerboating Is Here, The Infrastructure Is In Place And Sri Lanka Is Ready To Power Forward And Reach The Heights Of Success.

Powerboating is a very diverse sport, which can appeal to every level of society. The sport includes pleasure boat navigation, aquabikes (Jet skis), P750 thundercats (simplified race boats that two people navigate), GT 15/30 for young participants and Class 1 boats/ Formula 1 boats for the competitive sports combatants amongst us.

The boats are capable of speeds not seen before in Sri Lanka with the Formula 1 boat reaching speeds of 240km per hour, 750bhp and reaching 3g on a turn. These boats incorporating speed and a high fascination factor will attract a global audience and be a fantastic boon to Sri Lanka’s tourism industry and a spring board for businesses to reach their global audience. Powerboating can be at the simplest

level an excellent mode of advertisement with events and the boats and drivers themselves displaying brand names to the international market but more importantly it provides the perfect venue to bring together stakeholders from various walks of life for constructive networking, amongst other benefits. Through powerboating Sri Lanka will enable doors to be opened to present this island as an ideal destination for sports tourism and business paving the way for various industries to benefit from the influx of travellers and competitors bound to be linked to the sport.

Additionally Sri Lanka will be able to promote its own drivers and teams and gain international recognition as a result. Sri Lanka has acquired excellent prestige through its land-based sports, now the time is right to compete and acquire the same status on the water.

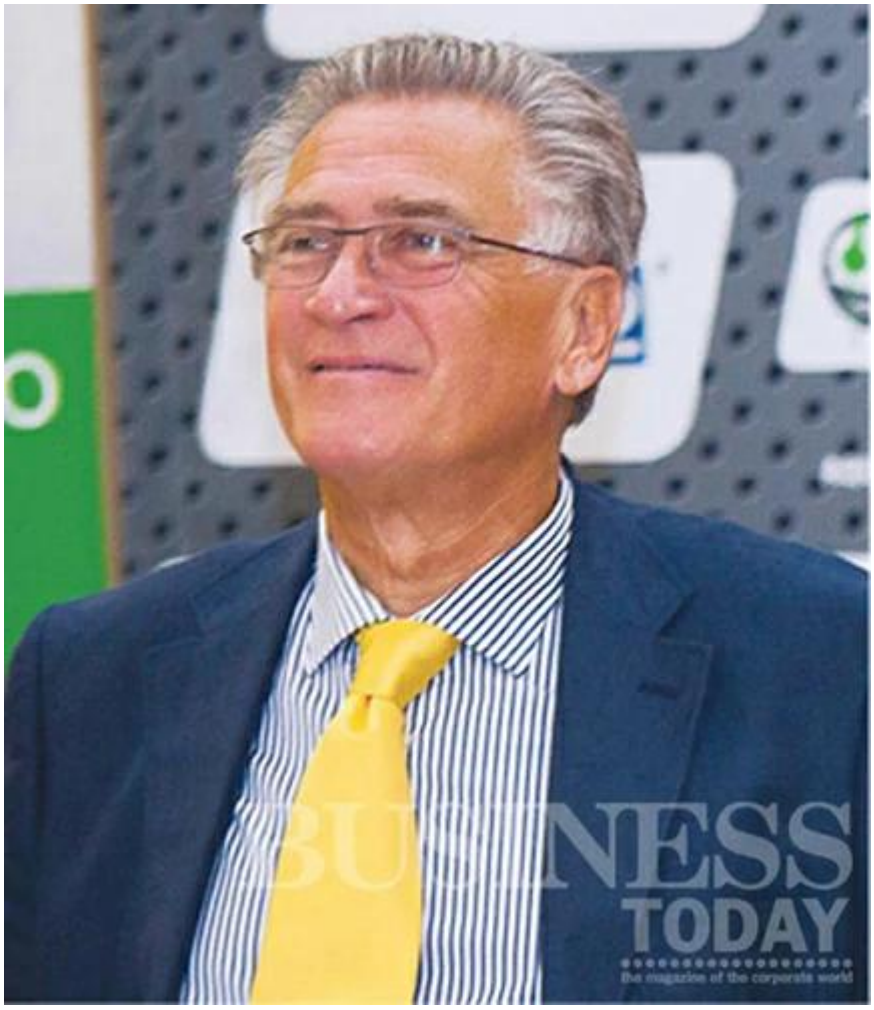
The Lanka Powerboat Association looks forward to supporting and working with interested parties to support and encourage the inception of district or regional boating clubs and are committed to providing training opportunities and making this sport popular amongst the youth of today. They aim to encourage the development of powerboat manufacturing to Sri Lanka and to bring Grand Priz and World Championship races to our shores.

Their next venture is to host a Formula 1 international circuit race as part of the F1H20 racing World Grand Priz and they are currently in the process of selecting from a shortlist of viable locations around the Island.

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