

Dune-Up 2008 aims to bring local and international runners who share a passion for nature and sport together

Ultra Triathlon 2007 in Dubai, holder of nine world records (having won 10 Iron man titles in 10 days in Mexico), and winner of the Triple Iron in Lensahn (Germany) in 2006, among others.

Although Dune-up Oman will be shorter in comparison, the soft sand will pose a major challenge for the record-holder, says Trier. "Susanne is looking forward to running together in a team with Omani athletes who share the same passion. For her, it is the best way to get to know a country and its people."

Keen to attract a wider audience to Dune-Up 2008, the organisers has embellished the event with a series of fun-filled and educational sideshows that promise to appeal to the general adventure-loving public as well.

Trier explains: "Athletes aren't the only ones who will participate in the event. Off-

road fans who want to join the tour are welcome and can enjoy the team spirit. During our McDonald's Dune-Up Training Camps we teach drivers not only how to handle the 4x4 car, but also how to free a car without damaging it when it gets stuck in the sand. Besides, people who are part of the service team will support the athletes with water, food and if necessary spare parts or a space in the car."

The main event of the McDonald's Dune-Up 2008 will kick off on December 6 with a press briefing for local and international media at the McDonald's outlet in the CCC area of Muscat. The participants then head for their camp in Wadi Bani Awf in Wilayat Rustaq to prepare themselves for the main challenge: the 120 km mountain bike trail along the Snake Gorge up to the mountain plateau.



Competing against the elements

On December 8, the athletes will be transferred by car to the Sharqiyah coast at Khuwaymah ahead of the start of the endurance run through the soft sand dunes of the Rimal al Sharqiya Sands. Braving the elements, they will slog

through 120 kilometres of the Rimal al Sharqiya's undulating dune-topped terrain with an eye on the finish line at Al Raha Camp. Awaiting them after an exhausting three-day run is a refreshing shower and sumptuous dinner.

Tourism spinoffs

Extreme sport enthusiasts and other spectators are welcome to join in on the grand finale lined up on December 11 at the Al Raha Camp, according to the Dune-Up Team. The

desert party, organised by Eventus, will include desert games and activities like camel riding, dune bashing and off-road training courses, culminating in a lavish bash against the spectacular backdrop of the Rimal al Sharqiya Sands in the evening.

A weekend package including accommodation, dinner, a raffle and the party can be booked with: oman@dune-up.com. Athletes and off road fans who would like to get further information about the participation can contact: info@dune-up.com and visit the website: www.dune-up.com

Given its obvious importance to Oman's tourism objectives, Dune Up 2008 is expected to win serious support from the Ministry of Tourism, which has of late been keenly aligning the Sultanate with high-profile international sport events. A case in point is recent iShare Cup sailing championship in which the Ministry sponsored the first ever Oman Sail team as a contestant.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Sports Affairs have often come together to jointly support the staging of events that make a significant contribution to the country's tourism industry. The government sees Oman as ideally suited for a host of adventure, endurance and extreme sports, including desert rallies, mountain-bike races, and off-road competitions.



Martin and Stefanie Trier, key members of the Dune-Up Oman 2008 organising team