ETIHAD FLY-PAST TO USHER IN THE RACE AGAIN

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The start of the 2015 Formula 1 **Etihad Airways** Abu Dhabi Grand Prix will once again begin with the traditional Etihad Airways fly-past as the teams, drivers and **race** fans at Yas Marina Circuit prepare for the final race of the 2015 season.

Etihad Airways' A380 Chief Pilot, Captain Ali Al Jabri, who is co-ordinating this year's spectacle and flying the superjumbo over the starting grid at Yas Marina Circuit, insists that it will be an amazing sight for the 60,000-strong crowd at Yas Marina Circuit and the hundreds of millions of fans watching across the globe on television.

"This year we have an amazing fly-past planned," said Al Jabri. "First we have an Etihad Airways Boeing 787 performing the fly-past before the UAE National Anthem, and then the UAE's air display team, Al Fursan, will fly over the start line following the Etihad Airways A380, which I will be piloting.

As headline sponsor of the event, the Etihad Airways fly-past has become synonymous with the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and this year's event will see the airline's stunning 'Facets of Abu Dhabi' livery flying over the impressive Yas Marina Circuit to mark the beginning of the race on Sunday.

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Months of planning take place before the formation is performed before the Formula 1® showpiece on race day.

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner (registration number A6-BLE), piloted by Captain Stephan Sukumar, will fly at an altitude of 600ft and an airspeed speed of 190 knots above the circuit. The A380 (registration number A6-APA) will fly at 800ft at an airspeed of 210 knots.

“First we get the request from Yas Marina Circuit to perform the fly-past,” explained Al Jabri. “Then we determine what the scope of the fly-past is and once we have all the details we work out a flight profile and get in the Etihad Airways simulators to practice the flight.

“We work together with Abu Dhabi Air Traffic Control and the Civil Aviation Authority and once everything is in place we then start rehearsals in the air.”

Captain Al Jabri spoke of the incredible experience to play such a huge part in the stunning season finale in Abu Dhabi, saying: “The view of Yas Marina Circuit from the air is phenomenal, you don’t realise how big the circuit is and as we fly over the West Grandstand we can see the cars lined up on the grid, the thousands of fans, it’s a huge honour to be involved in the day.”

The Etihad Airways fly-past will begin at 4.35 pm, taking place before and after the UAE national anthem and minutes before the start of the race.

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