

Formula E-Race



Members to cheer on Audi Formula E-Race team in grandstand!

The New York area is home to the Yankees and Knicks, the Belmont Stakes and the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. But the city that is the capital for so many sports has hardly been a center for auto racing. In July, that will change, when the Formula E circuit comes to the city for two races—and Audi Club members will be there to cheer on the Audi team racers!

The twist is that while the cars look like the open-wheel speedsters one would see in Indianapolis or Monaco, they run 100 percent on electricity, making Formula E something of a green racing series.

“The world has been trying for years to race in New York City, and it has never been possible,” said Alejandro Agag, the chief executive of Formula E. “Everyone has been trying to race in New York City. Formula One, everyone. New York is the capital of the world. We are really over the moon.” The course will be laid out at the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal in Red Hook.

The cars do not look like the Volt or Prius—they are single-seaters that to an untrained eye could pass for the rides of Marco Andretti or Lewis Hamilton.

“In a straight, they can reach 180 miles an hour, Agag said, but in a race over a twisty road-style course, they top out around 150 mph. There are expected to be 20 drivers in the races, but 40 cars.

Organizers said they believed the site in Red Hook would join the pantheon of picturesque racecourses.

“It’s a phenomenal setting in terms of view,” said Fred Dixon, the president of NYC & Company, the city’s official tourism organization. “Governors Island, the Statue of

Liberty, Manhattan, the Brooklyn Bridge. Very iconic.”

The Formula E series has involved companies like Audi, Jaguar, Renault and Richard Branson’s Virgin. In the first two years of the series, drivers included the former Formula One star Jacques Villeneuve as well as Nelson Piquet Jr., the son of the former champion, and Bruno Senna, nephew of the great Ayrton Senna. Leonardo DiCaprio has also lent his name as the “head of the sustainability committee.”

Formula E has raced in Beijing, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Paris, among other places. The race will be contained within the cruise terminal and will not involve public streets.

Though Formula E is eager to gain the respect held by venerable circuits like Formula One, it is not above adding quirky elements to draw attention. During the race, fans vote for their favorite drivers. The three who receive the most votes are awarded a Fan Boost — 50 extra horsepower for three seconds to be used in the last six minutes of the race.

The boost could be enough to overtake a car in front. In Mexico City last season, the boost made the difference when fans lifted Lucas di Grassi to a win, although he was later disqualified for unrelated reasons.

And if electric cars are not green enough, Agag said the electricity comes from generators fueled by glycerin from sea algae.