

(WOMEN IN SPORT)

IF YOU LIKED THE
NATIONAL DAY STUNTS
YOU'LL LOVE THIS

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR WOMEN-ONLY STUNT TEAM

Ahead of this weekend's Al Ain Air Championship, *Stylist* talks to Amanda Scheffler of all-women skydiving team, the Misty Blues

Air stunts seem to be all the rage in the UAE right now. Over the National Day holiday, it became almost de rigueur to see planes trailing smoke in the colours of the Emirati flag across the skies above Dubai. And this weekend, the long-running Al Ain Air Championship will see aerobatic performance teams pulling out their best tricks to impress judges.

This year there's been a buzz around the news that the Misty Blues – reportedly the world's only all-women skydiving demonstration team – will be performing. We caught up with team member Amanda Scheffler as she prepares to make the trip from Michigan, US, to Al Ain, UAE.

"People are always surprised to hear about an all-women skydiving team," she says. "Currently the entire sport is only about 15 percent women.

But I'm a welder by trade, so being in a male-dominated industry is my norm. And I'm an adrenaline junkie – when I'm skydiving I actually enjoy the pressure of not having any option to fail."

It was an act of teenage rebellion that led 34-year-old Amanda, who has been skydiving for 16 years, to the sport. "One day, when I was 18 years old, I was complaining to my mum that I was bored," she remembers. "She told me I needed a hobby and I replied that maybe I should try skydiving. She shook her finger at me and said, 'Don't you dare!' So, of course, I picked up the phone and booked my first skydive, and I've been hooked ever since. But if Mum hadn't been so against it, I might not have been so for it!"

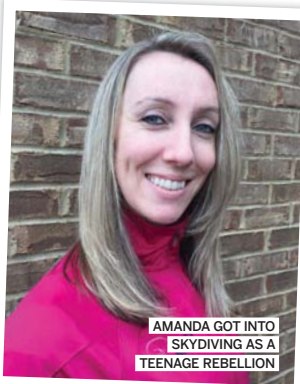
So what can we expect to see in Al Ain? Amanda reveals that the Misty Blues will be bringing some of their well-loved showstoppers, such as jumping out of the plane holding an 1,800 square foot American flag, and using ground-to-air communication

to interact with the audience while they're plummeting through the sky.

For Amanda, who says she's excited to visit the UAE for the first time, meeting the audience is always a highlight. "After we land, we walk straight into the crowd and the kids get so excited," she says. "That always gets to me – especially when it's little girls. I remember when I first started performing, a young girl in the crowd said to me, 'Can I be a Misty Blue when I grow up?' And I told her, 'Yes, you can! Don't ever let anyone tell you that there's anything you can't do.'"

Sound words, indeed.

17-19 December, Al Ain International Airport; alainairchampionship.ae



AMANDA GOT INTO
SKYDIVING AS A
TEENAGE REBELLION



RAFAEL NADAL:
COMING SOON
TO ABU DHABI

(READER OFFER)

SEE THE WORLD'S TOP TENNIS STARS COMPETE IN THE UAE

How's this for an ace way to see in the new year? The Mubadala World Tennis Championship returns to Abu Dhabi for its eighth year from 31 December 2015 to 2 January 2016. The Championship sees six of the world's top players battle it out on centre court at Zayed Sports City's International Tennis Centre for the honour of the Championship title (as well as prize money to the tune of more than Dhs918,000).

This year, the tennis powerhouses set to play include Milos Raonic, David Ferrer, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Kevin Anderson, while sports commentators predict the final showdown will be between 14-times Grand Slam champion, Rafael Nadal, and the reigning French Open champion, Stan Wawrinka – though it could be anyone's game on the day.

We're offering one reader the chance to win a pair of tickets (worth Dhs2,800) to the Championship. Don your chicest tennis whites!

To participate, send an email to stylistarabia@appgulf.com with 'Tennis Championship' in the subject before 22 December when a winner will be chosen; mubadalawtc.com