

AIR NEW ZEALAND 



RAROTONGA TRIATHLON 2023

Saturday 6th May 1.30pm | Starting from Tikioki Rarotonga



Welcome to the 28th Air New Zealand Rarotonga Triathlon which kicks off this Saturday at 1.30pm. We are super excited to be able to welcome both our local and international athletes back for our 2023 festival.

For all 28 years of the event Air New Zealand has been the lead sponsor. More recently, the airline has supported the event in association with The Edgewater Resort & Spa, Bank South Pacific, CITC and Ride Rarotonga. The event is an Olympic distance triathlon with a 1.5km swim, a 42km cycle and a 10km run. It will be staged from the site adjacent to Enea Manea Hall in Tikioki and cover a swim course in the lagoon, plus cycle and run legs on the main road.



History

Triathlon events have been held in Rarotonga since the early 1980's. Rarotonga's national championship race the 'Tinman' triathlon of slightly shorter distance than the Olympic distance has been held every year since 1983. Establishment of an event open to overseas competitors was helped along in 1995 by the then manager of Air New Zealand Barry Hardy. Subsequent Air New Zealand managers have continued to facilitate support for the event for which the Cook Islands Triathlon Association is immensely grateful.

In more recent years the International Triathlon has been promoted in conjunction with complementary businesses involved in tourism or which are an integral part of the economy here. The Edgewater Resort & Spa which commenced operations in the mid 1970's is the host resort and Bank South Pacific has provided financial support for which we are most grateful.

The event also has major support with sponsorship and staff involvement from Island Car & Bike Hire and we are also very grateful to CITC for their sponsorship of the CITC Boiler Swim on Thursday **4th** May and Ride Rarotonga for supporting our Mountain Bike event on Monday **8th** May and the Ride Rarotonga Tour de Raro Cycle Race on Tuesday **9th** May.

Tracking the history of our event, we saw the highest number of individuals in 2010 with 110 competitors and with teams added, made 137 in total. In 2014 with the attraction of it being the 20 year anniversary, there were 106 individuals but more teams which made a total of 178. The first event in 1995 had just 13 women and a similar number of men. In 1996 there were just 29 competitors.

At time of going to print, the start list for this year has approximately 60 competitors.



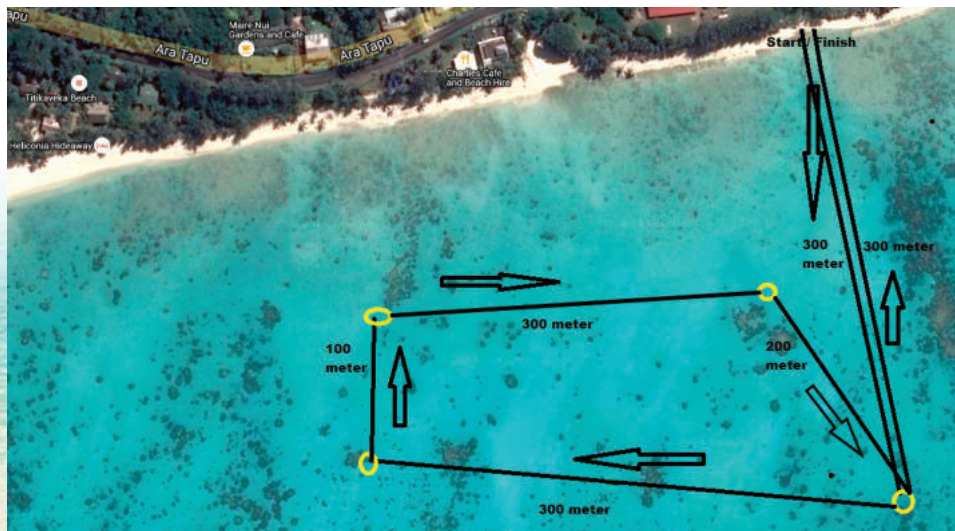
The course in brief

The race start and finish will be at the attractive beachside location at Tikioki just past Fruits of Rarotonga. The Cook Islands Triathlon Association is grateful to the landowners, the Raina family for making the site available and Cook Islands Police who have sanctioned a short main road closure and detour on the backroad in order to facilitate the event.

Race start and bike rack area

The bike racks and swim - bike - run changeover area are reserved for official race entrants and their gear only. No motor vehicles, motorbikes or cycles of non race entrants or any people other than competitors will be allowed in this area. Equipment of non athletes will be removed by officials as space is limited. The main road in front of the start - finish areas will be closed from 12:30pm. All vehicles must be parked away from the closed road and start - finish area. Parking will be facilitated on the designated car parking sections on the inland side of the road at the Fruits of Rarotonga end. The organising committee also asks motorists to avoid parking on the main road itself immediately outside this area.

The race will commence with an irregular shape one lap 1.5k swim in Tikioki lagoon. This will be an 'in water' start in waist deep water. The course is described as a 310 metre leg out toward the reef to marker # 1, a right turn onto the second leg of 300 metres followed by 4 shorter legs each turning slightly right back to marker # 1, and after turning there, straight back to the beach on the final 310m leg. There will be 4 main marker buoys and each will be on swimmers right shoulder at the turn except at the final turn (ie back at marker #1) which will be on each swimmer's left shoulder as they round it. See swim course map attached.



The cycle leg measures 42km being an "out and back course" covering much of the east and north sides of Rarotonga. The cycle will not circumnavigate the island. Marshals will be at critical points, but you must familiarize yourself with the course before the race.

Cycle course. Turn right at transition, head through Muri and the main Avarua town, continue past the airport and then the golf course, turn LEFT at Black Rock Store, signposted to Hospital, go up Hospital Hill approximately 200m, then turn left following the road down past the back of the golf course to the next intersection, turn left into Harley street then turn left at the main road go for approximately 3k, then make a U-turn, back, on the main road, back past the golf course, town and through Muri, all the way to the transition area.

The run leg is out and back, turning right out of the transition area, heading firstly towards Muri. The turnaround is at 2.5km (soon after the bridge at “Pacific Resort”), where runners will cross the road and return, continuing their run past the transition area and a further 2.5k to the second turnaround. At the second turnaround (at the King’s Representative offices), runners will again cross the road to run on the right and run 2.5k back to the finish. Runners will be directed to the nearest end of the transition area and onto the seafront area, down the finishing chute and through the finish gate.



The roadway has been marked at all relative points.

Please note that both cycle and run routes are subject to change by the organizing committee should circumstances require.

This course is new this year due to the change in the cycle route, which has been necessary due to the conditions of the road around the west of the island. The course records are some ten minutes slower than those on overseas courses due in part to the imperfect road surface, a non-drafting cycle leg of 42km and the high humidity often experienced. The open record held by Kiwi Bryan Rhodes has stood since 1998 at 1:58:18 despite the attempts of some big names over the years to better it. Australian Jason Metters came close in 2001, finishing just 4 seconds off the record. The women’s record has stood for 11 years when Debbie Tanner set a time of 2 hours 9 mins 38 secs in 2006. Sam Warriner came all so close in 2015 with a time of 2:09:48.

The Rarotonga race attracts a high proportion of recreational and age group athletes who aim to complete this challenging event rather than figure in the top place getters. Many athletes take part to enjoy doing very well a sport they have competed in for many years. For many overseas competitors it’s a fantastic sporting holiday.

Spectators are welcome and are encouraged to view the event as it unfolds. The action starts from the Tikioki beach beside Enea Manea Hall on Saturday at 1.30pm. As the main road will be closed over a 300 metre section, with a detour onto the back road and limited car parking at the site, official parking has been arranged on sections on the inland side of the main just outside the closed area. Parking will be marked, and the triathlon association is grateful for local residents cooperation in this.

Overseas athletes visiting Athletes

It is no doubt a testament to the fun and challenge of the race that the majority of our starters this year have competed in this event before, many more than once. Among our returning athletes are last year’s race winner and 2nd place Mike Roigard and Brent Knight, who had a fantastic race last year.

We are excited to see Joseph Aiona and Brynn Parry return to the island; these athletes previously lived on Rarotonga and have completed many triathlons here. Other frequent visitors include Leighton and Liz Hunt, who are racing together as a team, part of the group travelling here from Pukekohe travel. Katie Black, who is also racing as part of a team, and Maggie Ward, Karen Duckett and Lauren and Kevin Hann, who, along with our other frequent visitors have become great friends through their many visits. We are also excited to welcome Olivia Ritchie. Olivia has previously raced as an Elite, placing 3rd in the 2018 NZ Triathlon Champs, and has a number of successes under her belt in triathlon and athletics. She is expected to be one to watch with a very strong finish.

Local Competitors

Roland Neururer will once again be defending his ‘1st Local’ title. He holds the local race record for this event with a time of 2:12:50 set in 2013 and has won 2nd and two 3rd places overall in this race.

The fastest local lady is expected to be triathlete Adrianna Skurosz; Adrianna has been extremely strong this season and hopes to take the title for the 2nd consecutive year. Also training hard have been Mike Carr, Tarina Moorfield, Maria Rolleston and Lucy McDonald, who will all be racing on Saturday.

The local club will also be fielding a number of teams, with our familiar triathletes Geoff Stoddart and Taki Anaru, as well as the Postrzygacz juniors, three siblings racing together.

Race Photography

We are once again privileged to have the super-talented Scottie T as our race photographer. Scottie loves telling the story of an event, capturing athletes pushing themselves to their limit and celebrating reaching their goals. Scotty will be covering the week of events; make sure you give him a smile or a grimace when you see him on the course!

Electronic Timing

The race will again be timed electronically. Timing chips matching each athlete's race number will be handed out at race registration on Saturday morning. Athletes must collect these chips as early as possible at the transition area and fasten the velcro strap tightly. Should any athlete lose their ankle chip during the race, the timers will endeavour to record a manual time for you.

The organisers wish to advise you that you will be asked to pay a fee of \$70 if you lose your timing chip.

Timing Chip changeover for teams

For teams, the ankle strapped timing chip must be taken off and placed on the ankle of the next team member at transition before the cyclist then runner, starts out on their stage of the race.



The timing chip must be changed at the following points:

- Swim to Cycle – in front of the teams cycle rack
- Cycle to Run - after the cyclist has racked the bike, he / she moves to the end of the cycle rack and transfers the chip to the runner who then runs out over the timing mat.

There will be a cut off time of 4 hours 30 minutes for completion of the race which is 6pm. Water stop marshals will vacate the course at 5:30pm.

Cycle Race Caution ⚠️ 🐾 🐾

Roads on Rarotonga are not in the same condition as you may be used to overseas, pot holes and pedestrians (human or animal with varying numbers of legs) are common place on our roads! Whilst this is a race we urge you to exercise caution and be aware that other road users may not expect you to fly past them at speed. We will have marshals on all turn points however you are responsible at all times for your own safety. All standard Road Code rules apply.

There will be a police motorcycle escort 30 metres in front of the leading cyclist. Cyclists are encouraged to carry two drink bottles due to usually humid conditions.

No headphones of any sort are permitted during any part of the race in the interests of safety. Anyone wearing headphones will be disqualified.

Drafting on the Cycle leg

Is not allowed. Draft busters or technical officials as they are better known will monitor the cycle leg with two minute penalties applying to any cyclist riding within 12 metres of another cyclist or vehicle for more than 15 seconds. Such penalties are known as judgment calls and cannot be disputed. If drafting infringement appears imminent, a yellow warning card may be shown by the technical official. If drafting is blatant, a red card will immediately be shown to the cyclist and will represent a two minute penalty. The time penalty will be added to the overall race time.

Motorists are asked to please take extra care on the day, especially in the high activity areas such as Avarua and Muri.

Order of Events:

Thursday 4th May 2023, 3.30pm

Race Packs available at Trader Jacks . 3.30pm to 4:30pm

Registration for CITC Boiler Swim.

5:00pm CITC Boiler Swim start.

7.30pm Prize giving and Pasta Dinner at The Edgewater Resort & Spa

Race Packs available at The Edgewater Resort & Spa

Saturday 6th May 2023, 11.30am

Transition Opens at Tikioki site 11.30am - 1.00 pm: Race Registration and Numbering

1:30pm Race Start (waist deep water) in Tikioki Lagoon

6:00pm Race cut off time – marshals will vacate the course

Sunday 7th May 2023, 4.30 pm

Prize-giving & dinner at The Edgewater Resort & Spa

Monday 8th May 2023 , 8:00am

Ride Raro Mountain Bike Tour – The Edgewater Resort & Spa

Monday 8th May 2023 , 5:00pm

Hash House run

Sunset Resort

Tuesday 9th May 2023, 4.30 pm

Registration and timing chips for paid entrants for the Ride Rarotonga Round Raro Cycle Race.

4:45pm Race Start.

7:00pm Post Cycle Race Wrap-up and BBQ get together at The Edgewater Resort & Spa

Recent Years' winners and the race record holders

The overall race record holder is still Bryan Rhodes from the year 1998. He also won in 1997.

In the mens

2008-2010 Josh White from Auckland reigned supreme as overall champion and is the only athlete to have won 3 times in a row. Currently is a full-time coach of the Australian junior mens squad with the Queensland Academy of Sport.

2011 and 2012 Stephen Farrell of Auckland proved age is no barrier and won in fine style. Steve has been a career triathlete travelling the world to events and has an enviable record of success at the annual world championships of triathlon as well as the longer Half and Full Ironman distances. He was the mens 50 to 54 years world champion in London in 2013 and at Edmonton in 2014 and is a full-time triathlon coach for budding champions from throughout New Zealand as well as coaching for the North Harbour Triathlon Club.

2013 and 2014 David Vernon, originally from Canada but now residing in Auckland, was the winner for both years. A talented all-rounder, he remains a recreational athlete in Auckland.

2015 – Graham Perks from New Zealand. A Triathlon New Zealand board member with a passionate interest in the sport.

2016 – 2017 Jake Jackson-Grammer from Dunedin

2018 - Sam Kettle from New Zealand. That was the year of the storm, which blew in as the swim was starting and caused the cycle leg to be pulled from the race.

2019 Same Kettle returned for his 2nd consecutive victory

2020-2021 The Covid Years!

2022 Mike Roigard New Zealand

In the women's

The race record holder is still Debbie Tanner from 2006 in the time of 2:09:38. Debbie competed on the ITU professional circuit for several years, winning several overseas events. She went on to compete at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games (twice), where she had the best finish of 10th. She retired in 2012.

2008 - Jacinda Papps from NZ.

2009 - was Kelly Pick, who only started the sport in Rarotonga a couple of years prior and went on to win three titles with wins in 2011 and 2012.

2010 - Michelle Bremer of Tauranga topped the women's field. She is another who went on to greater achievement in the sport as a competitive world long-distance athlete, even winning Ironman Australia.

2013 and 2014 – local girl Vanessa Woodger won both years. She was best known for her triathlon abilities, was a former New Zealand junior elite squad athlete, and is a renowned top swimmer.

2015- Sam Warriner of Taupo became the first female to win the race overall. She is a former World Champion in the sport (2007) and although she retired recently from competitive racing, she is a full-time coach under the 'Sweat7' brand.

2016 Mary Gray from Dunedin took the honours and is still active in the sport.

2017 Rebecca Clarke represented NZ on the ITU circuit from 2011— 2016. Her win here in 2017 came in a year when Rebecca tried different challenges, including Half Ironman and off-road triathlon.

2018 Harriet Browning our local lady, was 1st across the line

2019 Molly Swanson from New Zealand took the win

2020-2021 The Covid Years!

2022 Rebecca Grace New Zealand



The best-ever splits for each discipline by an athlete doing the whole tri are:

Male

Swim- Cam Anderson (Australia) in the year 2000, 17 minutes 44 secs, and although it is reported a swim buoy moved in swells and shortened the course a little, the time remains. The next best swim time was Craig Stewart (NZ) in 2010 with 18:17. Bryan Rhodes (NZ) in 1997 had a time of 18:23

Bike: Bryan Rhodes (1998) 1:01:10. This guy was at his physical best in 97-98 however, the Raro roads were in better shape as well.

Run - Jason Metters (Australia) in 2001 with 34:46

Female

Swim - Debbie Tanner in 2006 20:44

Bike – Sam Warriner in 2015 1:06:49

Run - Debbie Tanner 2006 36:14

The best local splits, male and female combined are

Swim - Vanessa Palmer in 2009 22:00

Cycle - Geoff Stoddart in 2009 1:05:22

Run - Phil Washbourne in 2010 38:58

The total finish time records are:

Men

Bryan Rhodes (NZ) 1:58:18 (1998)

Women:

Debbie Tanner (NZ) 2:09:38 (2006)

Local male:

Roland Neururer 2:12:50 (2013)

Local female:

Kelly Pick 2:17:31 (2011)

Veteran male:

Stephen Farrell (NZ) 2.10:12 (2013)

Veteran female:

Sam Warriner (NZ) 2.09:48 (2015)

Junior male:

William Smith (NZ) 2.02.14 (1996)

Junior female:

Shanelle Barrett (NZ) 2.23.23 (1996)

The open team record is 2:11:07

Female team record is 2:24:58

Veteran team record is 2:24:07

Sponsors

The Cook Islands Triathlon Association would like to thank all their sponsors for their generosity and support in many ways for the Rarotonga International Triathlon:

Major sponsors:

- Air New Zealand
- The Edgewater Resort & Spa
- Bank South Pacific

Other sponsors and supporters:

- Vaima Pure Island Water
- Cook Islands Trading Corporation
- Ride Rarotonga
- The Cook Islands Triathlon Association is also grateful for the support from:
- The Raina Family, Landowners
- Cook Islands Police (Road and Athlete Safety)
- Nikao Girls and Boys Brigade (Water stops)
- Roly Rolleston (Water safety)
- Puaikura Volunteer Fire Brigade (First Aid and Marshaling)

To all our wonderful volunteers who have given their time to make our event possible, meitaki maata

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Kia Manuia Congratulations

Kia Akameitaki ia Kotou Katoatoa to all the participants and winners of the 2023 Air New Zealand Rarotonga Triathlon. Air New Zealand is proud to support this event.