

CLOSE FINISH AT STATE RUSSELL TO PAIHIA SWIM

One of New Zealand's premier open water swimmers Kane Radford won today's State Russell to Paihia swim beating the largest and strongest field ever assembled in Northland.

In a closely fought race, Radford took line honours in the 3.3km swim over defending champion Bryn Murphy by just 8 seconds.

Near perfect conditions greeted the over 750 swimmers who took to the water as part of the State Russell to Paihia swim - race two of the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series. In what is thought to be the largest open water swimming event Northland has ever seen, swimmers left from New Zealand's first capital, Russell and finished on the beautiful shores of Paihia.

As well as the swim across the harbour there was also a 1000m swim, a 300m entry-level event as well as the State OceanKids Swim which involved a 200m swim along the shoreline.

Radford (20yrs) was pleased to make amends for his fifth place at last months State Harbour Crossing in Auckland.

"It's great to get the win and to show everyone the sort of form I am in. The Auckland State Harbour Crossing was just a bad swim. It is awesome to be back on the top of the podium," he said.

At the half way point, Radford made a break over the chasing pack of 5 swimmers, however was never really sure how he was placed.

"I just had to swim as hard as I could the entire way, I couldn't see anyone till right near the end so it was a very hard swim."

Murphy held on for second place, crossing the line just 8 seconds behind the winner. Steven Kent used his surf life saving skills to take third place, out sprinting Ben Campbell-Macdonald and Stefan Talbot who finished fourth and fifth respectively.

In the women's field Charlotte Webby was too strong for the rest of the field, which included late inclusion into the race, Olympic swimmer, Melissa Ingram. Ingram was scheduled to swim in Australia today, however a tooth infection saw her unable to travel.

Webby starting this season as she finished the last, where she won every State New Zealand Ocean Swim event she entered last year.

"I am really pleased to win today, I haven't really swum in the ocean since t last season so I wasn't sure what to expect. It is great to be back in my wetsuit and racing like this again," said Webby.

For three other New Zealand sports stars, today provided a new challenge and achievement for their CV's. Ex-Silver Fern, Tania Dalton completed the 3.3km swim while Vodafone Warrior, Kevin Locke and his partner and current Black Sticks player, Jasmin McQuinn swam the 1000m swim.

“That was awesome, it was quite hard but really pleased I got through to the finish line” said Locke

You can expect to see Locke back on the start line at another State Ocean Swim event this summer.

“I'm looking forward to the King of the Bays swim, and I've talked some of the other (Warrior) boys into joining me, so it will be a great time.”

Scott Rice, Event Director of the State Ocean Swim Series, was extremely pleased with today's event.

“Northland has turned on a magic day for us all. The weather was amazing and it was great to see all the locals out supporting the event. It felt like the whole of Russell had come down to watch the swimmers start – just awesome.”

One of those locals was Wayne Brown, Mayor of the Far North District. Mayor Brown spoke to the swimmers prior to starting and then joined them on the water, stand-up paddling across to Paihia.

Today was the second staging of the State Harbour Crossing The event is the second in a series of six swims as part of the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series.

The next event in the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series is the State Capital Classic in Wellington on Saturday 29th January 2011.

State Russell to Paihia Swim Race two in the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series

Elite Male

1. Kane Radford Rotorua 37:33
2. Bryn Murphy Dunedin 37:41
3. Steven Kent Auckland 38:47
4. Ben Cambell-Macdonald Wellington 38:50
5. Stefan Talbot Auckland 38:51

Elite Female

1. Charlotte Webby Taranaki 40:27
2. Melissa Ingram Auckland 42:15

3. Brenda Russell Auckland 42:31
4. Alaanh Jury Auckland 42:56
5. Nicole Rosewarne Auckland 44:11

Take the plunge this summer. Find out more at www.oceanswim.co.nz

Previous winners of the State Russell to Paihia Swim:

Bryn Murphy Dunedin 39mins 51sec

Kate Brookes-Peterson Australia 43mins 34sec

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