

December 7th 2010

DEFENDING CHAMPION HEADS LARGEST OPEN WATER SWIMMING EVENT IN NORTHLAND'S HISTORY

Over 700 swimmers will take to the water in Russell this weekend as part of the State Russell to Paihia swim - race two of the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series. In what is expected to be the largest open water swimming event Northland has ever seen, swimmers leave from New Zealand's first capital, Russell and finish on the beautiful shores of Paihia.

As well as the 3.3km swim across the harbour the Saturday 11th event also includes a 1000m swim, a 300m entry-level event as well as the State OceanKids Swim which involves a 200m swim along the shoreline.

Last year's defending champion, **Bryn Murphy**, is back on the start line and determined to go one better than his second place at the State Harbour Crossing last month.

Also hoping to improve his placing at this event will be top New Zealand Open Water Swimmer, **Kane Radford**. Radford experienced a 'tough day at the office' in the first State Harbour Crossing and as a result is heading north to make amends.

Event Director, **Scott Rice**, is expecting these two to fight it out for the title but recognises the event is as much about the last person across the line as it is about the first person.

"One of the great things about this series is it allows anyone to line up against some of the best swimmers in the world and complete their own personal challenge. For some people this will be their first ever open water swimming event and to complete it will be a dream come true," says Rice.

Top seeded female swimmer, **Charlotte Webby**, had her dreams come true last season winning all three of the State New Zealand Ocean Swims that she entered. Having missed the first swim of the series this season, Webby will be the one to watch in Russell.

For three other New Zealand sports stars, Saturday will provide a new challenge and achievement for their CV's. New Zealand league player, **Kevin Locke** and his partner and current Black Sticks player, **Jasmin McQuinn** will complete the 1000m swim together. Ex-Silver Fern, **Tania Dalton** is also looking forward to being on the start line.

The State Russell to Paihia swim is race two of the State New Zealand Ocean Swim

Series. Now in its sixth year, this series attracts some of the world's best open water swimmers to New Zealand, all chasing their share of a \$50,000 cash and prize pool and the chance to have their name on the end of season trophy. Elite swimmers accumulate points over the season, their best three results are then added together to determine the overall series winners who take home the \$2000 bonus cheque.

For State Insurance, the support of the series is part of the biggest sponsorship deal in its one hundred year history of supporting New Zealand communities.

State's Acting Executive General Manager, **Roger Wallace** said it's fantastic to be a part of such a great series and couldn't be happier with how the season has started.

"The first event of the series was amazing, such a great atmosphere. It was a privilege to hand out prizes at the prize giving and to see all the happy swimmers cross the line. I wish everyone the very best for Saturday." Wallace commented.

State Russell to Paihia Swim

Saturday 11th December

Start times:

OceanKids – 8.45am

Give It A Go 300m – 9.30am

Step It Up 1km – 10.15am

I'm Going Long 3.3km – 11.30am

The 3.3km swim starts at Russell Beach and finishes at Paihia Beach. All other events start and finish at Paihia Beach.

State NZ Ocean Swim Series, 2010/2011:

State Harbour Crossing, Auckland: Sunday 21 November 2010

State Russell to Paihia, Bay of Islands: Saturday 11 December 2010

State Capital Classic, Wellington: Saturday 29 January 2011

State Corsair Classic, Christchurch: Saturday 26 February 2011

State Sand to Surf, Mt Maunganui: Saturday 26 March 2011

State King of the Bays, North Shore City, Auckland: Saturday 16 April 2011

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

2009 winners of the State Russell to Paihia Swim:

Bryn Murphy (Dunedin) 39:51

Kate Brookes-Peterson (Australia) 43:34

Athlete profiles for State Russell to Paihia Swim:

Male:

Bryn Murphy

Bryn heads into the 2010 Harbour Crossing as defending champion and one to watch this season after a very impressive 2009/2010 season. The 2007 NZ 1500m freestyle champion was fairly new to open water swimming last season however surprised a few taking several podium finishers and taking second place in the overall series.

Kane Radford

Rotorua swimmer Kane Radford has huge interest through his dominance of the State Swim Series. He is a three time series champion and has won the State Harbour Crossing in three straight years (2006- 2008) and is back to reclaim his title after a season in the States.

Steven Kent

Winner of State Kings of the Bays) in April 2010. National swimming representative and title holder. New Zealand representative in Surf Lifesaving. Younger brother of Olympian, Dean Kent.

Female:

Charlotte Webby

Charlotte won every State Ocean Swim she start last season, winning the overall title. The Taranaki NZ butterfly champion will be aiming to repeat that feat again this season.

Alannah Jury

Jury is a New Zealand Rep in Open water swimming and achieved an outstanding third at the 2009 Australian 10km open water championship, in doing so qualifying for the FINA World Championships where she finished an amazing 13th on debut in Rome, despite losing her goggles on lap one. The North Shore 19 year old is a great prospect and with a third place at the 2009/2010 State Harbour Crossing event, confirmed her place as one of the countries best open water swimmers.

Famous Faces at the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series 2010/2011 Season:

Shaun Quincey – trans-Tasman rower

Alison Roe – Marathon runner

Samatha Warriner – Olympic Triathlete

Tania Dalton – Former Silver Fern

Richard Ussher – World Champion Adventure Racer, Coast to Coast winner and Ironman athlete

Awen Guttenbeil – Ex New Zealand League Player

Cory Hutchings – NZ Surf Life Saving Champion

Toni Street – Sports Presenter TNVZ

Joanna Lawn – 7 time winner of Ironman New Zealand

Kevin Locke - NZ League Player

Jasmin McQuinn - NZ Black Sticks player

Michelle Pickles - TV3