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FAST TIMES AND CLOSE FINISHES AT THE STATE CAPITAL CLASSIC SWIM IN WELLINGTON

In perfect conditions and over one of the strongest fields ever assembled in Wellington Harbour, Kane Radford and Cara Baker took closely fought wins at the State Capital Classic Swim today.

More than 850 swimmers took to the water in race three of the State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series. The 2.8km premier event took swimmers from Oriental Bay around the iconic fountain and out to the lighthouse before returning to Freyberg Beach.

20 year old, Radford (Rotorua) swam to his race plan but had to work hard to take the title over the newly crowned National 5km Open Water Champion, Bryn Murphy (Invercargill), just four seconds separating the two swimmers.

"My plan today was to really take it out hard, to have the other guys swim to the pace I set, it worked I think and I'm really stoked to take another win in the series."

Second place, Bryn Murphy had to settle for another second place this season.

"Three second places out of three races for me." he said smiling after the race. "I'm pleased with how the race went though, I just need to work on getting a faster start and I'm sure I can get a win."

Wellington locals, Ben Campbell-Macdonald and Casey Glover had to settle for third and fifth respectively. Young Auckland swimmer, Stefan Talbot, separating them in fourth place.

For Adventure Racing World Champion, Richard Ussher, the State Capital Classic provided a welcome change to his grueling Coast to Coast training.

"I have given Triathlon training a rest this year and am back concentrating on Coast to Coast, so getting a little bit of swimming in for this event has been a nice change to the running, riding and paddling program."

In the women's field Baker continued her impressive start to the year adding this title to her 5km and 10km national titles earlier in the month.

Charlotte Webby held on for second place finishing just 3 seconds behind Baker with Wellington local Georgia Hind giving the crowd something to cheer about taking out third.

Baker was pleased to hold onto her impressive unbeaten record this year.

"I just went out as hard as I could and tried to hold onto the guys toes. Near the end, I saw a female swim cap right on my feet and just had to work as hard as I could to keep her back."

Earlier in the day hundreds of swimmers had enjoyed the State Ocean Kids 200m swim as well as the Give it a Go 300m and Step It Up 1000m events, amongst them was Wellington Mayor, Celia Wade-Brown who completed the 300m swim.

Scott Rice, Event Director of the State Ocean Swim Series, said the Wellington race of the series never fails to disappoint.

"This is our fifth year in Wellington and every year we have had incredibly good conditions, we thought this year was going to be different but the wind direction changed just before the start and the swimmers were treated to the best conditions possible."

The State Capital Classic was race three of the six race State New Zealand Ocean Swim Series. Race four is the State Corsair Classic in Christchurch on Saturday 26th February.

Image credits to: Mark Tantrum. marathon-photos.com

2011 State Capital Classic Results

Elite Male

1. Kane Radford	Rotorua	30minutes 20seconds
2. Bryn Murphy	Dunedin	30minutes 25seconds
3. Ben Campbell-Macdonald	Wellington	31minutes 20seconds
4. Stefan Talbot	Auckland	31minutes 41seconds
5. Casey Glover	Wellington	31minutes 45seconds

Elite Female

1. Cara Baker	Auckland	31minutes 51seconds
2. Charlotte Webby	Taranaki	31minutes 54seconds
3. Georgia Hind	Wellington	33minutes 49seconds
4. Brenda Russell	Auckland	33minutes 39seconds
5. Nicole Rosewarne	Auckland	35minutes 48seconds

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