Ironman Wales - Athletes Ready to Prove Anything Is Possible

Monday 8 September, 2014

In just under a week over 2,000 athletes from around the world will be embarking on one of the world's ultimate tests of endurance when they take to the water from Tenby's North Beach at 7am, on Sunday 14th September for the start of IRONMAN Wales.

An astonishing 50% will be embarking on a challenge of a lifetime for the first time, in a bid to gain the IRONMAN badge of glory by completing the 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike and 26.2 marathon run within the allocated 17 hours.

Renowned for being one of the toughest events on the IRONMAN Tour, which now offers over 100 events globally, Pembrokeshire embraces IRONMAN Wales like no other. Not only does the county boast a record 191 confirmed entries, but thousands of spectators from far and wide turn out to provide an electric atmosphere like no other, right up to the midnight cut off.

Novice entrants include an 18 year old student to a 60 year old grandmother amongst the athletes flying in from over 30 countries to experience the Pembrokeshire welcome. Each has their own personal reason for taking up such a challenge. Whilst some will be relishing their first IRONMAN challenge, with many raising money for a variety of hugely worthwhile and causes, others will be looking for early qualification for the 2015 IRONMAN World Championship in Hawaii.

Some hugely inspirational entries have defied all odds to make the start line and numerous athletes have turned their life around in the process; From obesity to IRONMAN, Bevan Dafydd, 41, is part of the 25 strong South Wales Police team, having weighed 25 stone and lost an amazing 13 stone, whilst 30 year old and former heavy smoker, Andrew Burgess from Tenby, has lost 7 stone since taking up the challenge, “IRONMAN has made me a new person” he commented.

For Thea Davies, triathlon has given her renewed focus after her husband was killed serving in Afghanistan and Emma Lambert, aged 29, was told she would never be able to run again after an accident out training in 2006. These athletes, together with many others overcoming daily health issues such as severe asthma, chronic bronchiectasis and diabetes 1, are just a handful of examples to inspire others and prove that anything really is possible.

Former Welsh Rugby international Richard Webster, will be one of several former Pro athletes who have turned to triathlon.

On the task ahead, Richard said: “A combination of being heavily over weight and watching my wife doing triathlons inspired me to take up the challenge. After 34 years in rugby which saw me having 10 knee operations, I refuse to let this defeat me and consequently have had to develop a way of being able to do the run - with crutches! It's going to be a close call to get to the finish line before my wife but just completing it is going to be the biggest achievement in itself.”

Additionally 2014 sees the introduction of a new IRONKIDS run event from 3pm on Saturday 13th September for 3-14 year olds. Taking place in and around the town of Tenby, a sell out 750 kids will finish under the iconic IRONMAN arch on The Esplanade.

Event organisers and athletes are encouraging as many as possible to come and be part of the weekend's action, as well as seeing some of the world's leading triathletes compete, which is free to watch. The first Pro male athlete is expected to cross the finish line at approximately 3.45pm with the finish line party continuing up to midnight.

Kevin Stewart, Managing Director IRONMAN, Northern Europe, commented, “IRONMAN Wales has earned its reputation as not only one of the toughest IRONMAN races, but also one that offers athletes the most amazing atmosphere. This couldn't be achieved without the extensive support throughout the county of Pembrokeshire, together with Welsh Government and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority. We're very much looking forward to welcoming all of the athletes and spectators for what we hope will be another fantastic event.”

For further information on the event and spectator vantage points please visitwww.ironmanwales.com

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