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WAIKIKI HOSTS 42ND ANNUAL ROUGHWATER SWIM

2011 Stage of Iconic Race Set for 9 am on Labor Day

For the 42nd consecutive year dating back to 1970, some of the world's top swimmers will unite in Honolulu, Hawaii to partake in the Waikiki Roughwater Swim, one of the world's oldest and most iconic open water competitions. The 2.384-mile (3.84 km) race takes place on Labor Day, September 5, 2011, beginning at 9:00 am (HST) at Sans Souci Beach between the Natatorium and New Otani Hotel. It will finish at approximately 12 noon on Duke Kahanamoku Beach at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel. The race is held in conjunction with the seventh annual "Swim with Mike," a scholarship fund providing financial means for advanced education to physically challenged athletes. Past scholarship recipients include 2010 Hawaii Pacific University graduate Joe Broc, Keith Kitamura of Kapaa High School and the University of Hawaii, Ann Yoshida of Mililani HS and Utah State University, as well as current student Tusi Mailo of Kahuku HS and BYU-Hawaii. As in past years, the winner of the 2011 swim will have his or her name engraved on the "Alexander Hume Ford" perpetual trophy, while an elite division award will be presented to the top three male and female overall finishers. The top three from each gender in each age division will also be honored.

Group "A" of the Waikiki Roughwater field begins its swim at 9 am, which includes the top-100 finishers from the 2010 race, all prior overall and divisional first place finishers, and current NCAA and high school All-Americans. The swim continues with all subsequent groups taking off in five-minute intervals starting at 9:05 am. On Sans Souci Beach, competitors will initially swim 0.42 miles (677 meters) into the open water. For the bulk of the morning, they will then head north up Waikiki for 1.43 miles (2,305 meters), followed by the 0.52-mile (842 meters) homestretch to the finish line at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Channel. The entire course will be marked with flags every several hundred meters, while swimmers are required to pass outside both corners at the aforementioned distances. Crossing the finish line (20-30 meters up the beach) under two hours and forty minutes and wearing a swim cap during the entire swim are amongst other requirements to be recognized as an official finisher of the event.

Notable entrees expected back for this year's Waikiki Roughwater Swim include twenty-three year old world champion Chip Peterson of North Carolina. He finished second overall last year (45:46), six seconds behind champion Travis Nederpelt (45:40). Peterson owns a 10K open water world championship from Montreal in 2005, before adding recent 2010 individual titles in the Pan Pacific 10K in Irvine, CA and the RCP Tiburon Mile in San Francisco, CA. Internationally, New Zealand's Kane Radford is an open water swimmer who finished 10th overall (47:43) and third in the male 19-24 division on Waikiki in 2010. He is a national champion in both his home country and Australia in the 800-meter and 1500-meter. Radford is also a 2009 champion in the RCP Tiburon Mile and a 2011 participant in the FINA World Championships in Shanghai, China. Projected top female participants include Luane Rowe of Sydney, Australia, as well as American Suzanne Heim-Bowen. Rowe has won the last three female titles on Waikiki, including last year's 23rd overall placement (51:18). Her best overall finish was eighth in 2008 (55:01), while also cracking the top-10 in '09 with her personal-best time (47:21). She has claimed numerous races in Australia, including the 2K Division at the Cole Classic on Shelly Beach, as well as 1K and 2K ocean swim races on Bondi Beach. In 2007, meanwhile, Heim-Bowen became the first-ever open water swimmer to be inducted into the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame. Amongst her many claims to fame is swimming the English Channel twice in one week.

All told from the 2010 Waikiki Swim, 10 of the top-20 finishers hail from Honolulu, led by a fifth place result from John Flanagan (47:12). Plenty of that local talent returns for the 2011 race, including Kacy Johnson, 17, taking 13th overall last year with a runner-up spot in the male 15-18 division (48:06). Johnson is this year's North Shore Challenge Champion (47:26). Nineteen-year old Jayson Hagi of the University of Hawaii swim team is back from a 48:48 swim, a top-15 overall and third place divisional placement. Other top returnees from the Aloha State are University of Hawaii products Steve Allnut, 22, a 14th-place finisher (48:12) last year and two-time North Shore series winner, as well as Ian Wheeler, an Olympic Trial Qualifier in the 400-Free who cracked the top-20 overall on Waikiki (50:01). Also of special local note is former Waikiki Champion Rick Heltzel of Honolulu, third in the 2010 male 50-54 division (54:47). He serves on the board and leads clinics for Waikiki Roughwater Swim. Hawaii's top masters' coach and two-time event champion Joe Lileikis returns from a 1:01.45 time. He is recovering from cancer and chemo treatment from earlier this year.

The hometown of Honolulu is also well represented within female roughwater competitors, beginning with fifteen-year old Jasmine Mau. The reigning North Shore Challenge Champion, Mau finished 76th overall last year (top-eight percentile) in 56:08, good for a silver finish in the 13-14 female group. Miki David swam a 56:36 in 2010, third in the 40-44 group and five overall spots behind Mau. Charlea Goodness, 17, crossed last year's finish line in 58:09, second in the 15-18 division before adding a runner-up result in the North Shore race (55:53). Finally, one of the youngest of all-time to attack the Waikiki open water competition is 12-year old Honolulu native Lara Yasumi. She is back from a 1:05.20 performance in 2010, No. 1 in the 11-12 female group and a top quarter finisher within the entire field.

Major sponsors for the 2011 Waikiki Roughwater Swim include Alaska Airlines (additionally serving the event's live broadcast), TYR Sports-Swim Caps, New Otani Hotel, Hilton Hawaiian Village, and Hale Koa Hotel. Product sponsors are Planet Sun (additionally providing event giveaways), Gatorade, Pepsi, Outrigger Canoe Club, and SBR Sports Inc. Live streaming of the competition is courtesy of liveswim.com and will be linked to the Waikiki Roughwater Swim website, www.wrswim.com.