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Free to use editorial images attached, captions: big crowds flock to Ngamotu Beach every year to see the action live and up close; Ngamotu Beach will again host all races on Sunday March 25; credit: Scott Taylor/ITU

NEW PLYMOUTH PRAISED BY EVENT ORGANISER FOR 'CAN DO' ATTITUDE

This Sunday will see the eyes of the triathlon world fall once again upon New Plymouth, with the hosting of the Quality Hotel Plymouth International ITU Triathlon World Cup at Ngamotu Beach, with Race Director Shanelle Barrett singing the praises of the local council, sponsors and stakeholders for their commitment and cooperation in hosting this globally significant event.

"I work all across New Zealand and without a doubt they have been the most amazing region to work with. They have welcomed me with open arms, there is a small community feeling about it as everyone goes out of their way to help me with everything," said Barrett.

"From Sport Taranaki helping to organize the volunteers, to our sponsors wanting to leverage their involvement, our partners engaging with us throughout the process and the council doing all they can to smooth the path for us as event organisers, it has just been a delight. I love the region and their attitude and have thoroughly enjoyed putting the race together with all of our partners."

NEW BIKE COURSE

The event is now a familiar and hugely popular one on the calendar and it is one that is growing and evolving. The 2018 edition sees the addition of the WIL Sport Oceania

Junior Championships (and Youth Olympic Games qualifier) races on Sunday morning, and a considerable tweak to the bike course for all races, with the juniors and the elite athletes in the World Cup races on Sunday afternoon taking on a new and slightly tougher course, one that will sort out the contenders from the pretenders during the 20km cycle leg.

The event remains based at Ngamotu Beach with the swim, transition area, finish line and main spectator viewing area. The one-lap 750 metre swim and multi-lap 5km run remain unchanged, but the four-lap bike course will have a new and tougher look to it, with riders heading up Bayley Road before taking a right turn along Breakwater Road and heading up and over Centennial Drive to take in breathtaking views back to the main venue and over Port Taranaki, as well as across to Mount Taranaki.

Barrett says the primary motive behind the change was to minimize the impact on local residents and businesses, but the by-product is a challenging and undulating course for the athletes.

“There are very few residences impacted and most of the businesses along the route are closed on Sunday. It provides more views down on to the venue and across to Mt Taranaki, but the smaller impact and inconvenience on the community was our primary reason, as well as safety with a full road closure.”

For all spectator information, including schedule, course maps, and road closures [CLICK HERE](#)

Changes to this year’s event have been welcomed by Venture Taranaki.

“The new course will offer spectators many more vantage points from which to see the action, keep things interesting for competitors, and present a different perspective of New Plymouth to the global media audience that the event attracts,” said Venture Taranaki Chief Executive Stuart Trundle.

“In responding to feedback from residents, athletes and local businesses the event is continuing to evolve. In doing so it is further cementing its position as an unmissable stop on the ITU World Cup circuit.”

Port Taranaki chief executive Guy Roper said the port was thrilled to host the New Plymouth ITU Triathlon World Cup race for the seventh time and the change to the bike course would add a new and exciting element to the event.

“It’s fantastic to again host some of the world’s best triathletes in New Plymouth and for the Taranaki public to see them up close and in action at Port Taranaki,” Mr Roper said.

“The port area is recognised as a great venue for the triathlon and the change to the bike course will enhance that further – there will be superb views from Centennial Drive and there will be plenty of good vantage points to watch the athletes.

“We’re looking forward to seeing some close competition ahead of the Commonwealth Games next month and we wish all the athletes the best for this weekend’s race,” Mr Roper said.

There is some history to the new bike course, with riders in the old age group race (no longer on the schedule) going up Centennial and beyond, but the new course is one that many years ago also helped form a motor racing circuit, adding a different twist for the triathletes very much generating their own horsepower.

Barrett says Tri Australia, Triathlon New Zealand and the ITU were both consulted about the changes.

“The feedback was great from both countries, they like the course and the tough aspect of the bike and the challenge that it provides. We also ran all the changes by the ITU and received their support for what we are trying to do. Most of the nations canvassed were happy however that it was going to be a safer course and no vehicles would be able to get on course, that was massive with everyone.”

Barrett is no stranger to the sport or to organising events but feels rejuvenated as she contemplates her first New Plymouth World Cup as sole Event Director.

“I have been in the sport for 30 years, to progress from working with Terry (previous race director Terry Sheldrake) as a 20-year-old helping on Weet Bix events to now taking on an international event of this scope, one that Terry and Kathy have set up and is already well established is very exciting. I feel very privileged that I am in a position to

carry on that work and that Terry had that faith in me. This is a passion of mine and this being the only World Cup race in New Zealand it is an even greater responsibility.”

The event is made possible thanks to the support of Venture Taranaki, Quality Hotel Plymouth International, TSB Community Trust, WIL Sport.

For all event partners and sponsors, [CLICK HERE](#)

Event Schedule, [CLICK HERE](#)

Full elite men’s start list, [CLICK HERE](#)

Full elite women’s start list [CLICK HERE](#)



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