

Media Release

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AUSSIES TO UNLEASH WOMEN'S DREAM TEAM IN SYDNEY

World's best triathletes Down Under for ITU World Championships opener

Australia will field an intimidating women's dream team when Sydney hosts the opening race of the 2011 Dextro Energy Triathlon ITU World Championship Series on April 10.

Reigning world champion Emma Moffatt will be joined by Olympic champion Emma Snowsill and last year's rapidly emerging Under 23 world champion Emma Jackson in what will be an absorbing home soil battle. Rounding out a full strength Australian women's team is the well-credentialed Annabel Luxford, fellow Queenslander Felicity Abram and Western Australia's Felicity Sheedy-Ryan.

They will need to overcome an impressive array of international competitors, including last year's race winner Barbara Riveros Diaz (Chile), emerging Canadian Paula Findlay, 2010 world championship series runner-up Nicola Spirig (Switzerland), Japan's consistent Mariko Adachi and perennial big race challengers Andrea Hewitt (New Zealand) and Lisa Norden (Sweden).

Snowsill triumphed over Moffatt in the world championship series grand final in Budapest at the end of last season during one of the rare occasions she was fully fit and focused, but Moffatt's amazing tale of consistency ensured she successfully defended her overall world crown.

Snowsill missed last year's inaugural Sydney world championship race following a long lay-off and will go into this year's event a little short of race fitness, having withdrawn from the ITU Mooloolaba World Cup lead-in event due to a minor heel complaint. But she's looking to make up for lost time.

"I was extremely disappointed to miss out on racing in Sydney last year and, on the whole, it was a very frustrating season, although good end in Hungary," Snowsill said. "I'm certainly a few races short of peak fitness, especially now that I've had to withdraw from Mooloolaba, but aside from that I've had a solid build-up and I'm feeling mentally fresh, so I'm looking forward to working my way into the season and hopefully letting people know that I'll be in the thick of the action as the year progresses.

"It's always an exciting atmosphere when the first big races of a new season roll around – you soon find out who's in good shape and there are always some tactical games to be played out."

Moffatt was lucky to make it to the start line at all last year, having suffered a chipped shoulder from a pre-season bike fall, but rallied for a typically gutsy third place in a thrilling sprint finish.

"The atmosphere was wonderful last year – one of my most enjoyable races, considering the amazing back-drop and great home-town support," Moffatt said. "I just want to go out and enjoy the moment and try not to look too far ahead. This is a long season and everyone has an eye on Olympic qualification (for London in 2012) during the races later in the year, so it's a matter of working hard but smart."

The Australian men's team will again be headed by the ever-consistent Olympic duo of Brad Kahlefeldt and Courtney Atkinson. James Seear (Qld) and Brendan Sexton (Vic), both former Under 23 world championship silver medalists, will lend able support.

Kahlefeldt was rewarded for a string of strong performances last season to finish third on the world championship ladder. He is looking to defend his Mooloolaba World Cup title this weekend, before bettering his Sydney efforts last year.

"I was a bit dirty on myself after feeling flat and missing out on a top 10 finish in Sydney last year, especially having raced so well in Mooloolaba, but I learnt a bit from that and hopefully my preparation will ensure I'm fresh and fighting fit," he said. "It's a big year leading into London, so it would be a nice confidence-builder to get things off to a good start."

The men's field boasts great depth. Kiwi veteran Bevan Docherty will be there to defend his title, along with multiple world champion Javier Gomez (Spain), 2008 Olympic champion Jan Frodeno (Germany), young British sensation Alistair Brownlee and veteran Greg Bennett, who raced for Australia last year before applying to race for the United States, where he now resides.

The Sydney Olympic Distance course is arguably the most spectacular and spectator-friendly in the world, with maximum elite fields of 65 swimming 1500 metres in Farm Cove, next to the Sydney Opera House, riding 40km, predominantly along the Cahill Expressway and Macquarie Street on a tight eight-lap circuit, and running 10km on a 4-lap loop along Macquarie and College streets to finish in Hyde Park.

About 2500 age group athletes will also compete on a similar course that takes in the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The event is a joint initiative between the International Triathlon Union, the NSW Government through Events NSW, and Triathlon Australia, with USM Events engaged as the event delivery partner.

2011 Dextro Energy Triathlon ITU World Championship Series

Race 1, Sydney, on Sunday, April 10

Age Group start: 6.35am onwards (AEST)
Elite Women: 11.20am
Elite Men: 2.00pm

Australian Team: WOMEN: Emma Moffatt (Qld), Emma Snowsill (Qld), Emma Jackson (Qld), Annabel Luxford (Qld), Felicity Abram (Qld), Felicity Sheedy-Ryan (WA). **MEN:** Brad Kahlefeldt (NSW), Courtney Atkinson (Qld), Brendan Sexton (Vic), James Seear (Qld)

For race information and event entry details, visit the official event website <http://sydney.triathlon.org>

For further information:

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