

Media Release

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## **FIELD OF DREAMS FOR SYDNEY'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OPENER** ***Australian stars to take on the best in Sunday's spectacular ITU triathlon***

Australia's triathlon team is confident of setting a hot pace in the opening round of the 2011 Dextro Energy Triathlon ITU World Championship Series this Sunday, despite hosting one of the best fields ever seen in the country.

Reigning world champion Emma Moffatt and 2008 Olympic champion Emma Snowsill have the credentials to deliver the home nation an historic win, while Brad Kahlefeldt, ranked third in the world, and emerging Victorian Brendan Sexton, should feature within a talent-laden lead pack.

Kahlefeldt, who warmed up with a last-start win over Sexton in the ITU Mooloolaba World Cup, said the familiar international faces will ensure a testing time from the outset of the 1500-metre swim, 40km ride and 10km run of the spectacular inner-Sydney course.

"Most of the leading contenders have been based in Australia for weeks or even months over the summer, so where we used to get a bit of a jump on the Europeans as they came out of their winter, that advantage has dwindled in recent years and it's now a very level playing field from the first race," Kahlefeldt said.

"You don't want to get left behind in the swim because there's so much depth in the field and you use a lot of energy getting yourself back into contention. The medals might well come down to the final kilometre of the run but, with any number of guys capable of winning, it means you can hardly put a foot wrong throughout the race if you want to give yourself a chance near the end."

Reigning world champion, Spain's Javier Gomez, German 2008 Olympic gold medallist Jan Frodeno, Great Britain's star Alistair Brownlee and veteran Greg Bennett, who will race in USA colours having represented Australia for 17 years, have all been based in Queensland leading into the event.

In the women's race, Snowsill appears a dangerous wildcard, having missed Mooloolaba with a minor heel complaint. While her race form is untested, no-one will underestimate the diminutive Queenslander following her stunning win in last year's series grand final in Budapest after a disappointing season.

"It was disappointing to withdraw from Mooloolaba because I would have liked a tough race under my belt going into this event, but I've knocked out a couple of solid training runs since and that has given me a confidence boost," Snowsill said. "There's nothing like race form, so I'm a little behind the eight ball, but you never know what can happen with a big Aussie crowd cheering for you and the adrenaline pumping! Hopefully, I can stay on the pace early and we'll see what unfolds from there."

Moffatt has shown her usual consistency leading in, with a silver medal in Mooloolaba.

"Racing this course is one of the highlights of the year, especially for anyone wearing green and gold," she said. "I'm happy with my form, but it's early days and the field is strong, so I'll just try and work my way into the race, stay out of trouble and get myself into a good position for the run."

The pair will be up against last year's race winner Barbara Riveros Diaz (Chile), promising Canadian Paula Findlay, the USA's Laura Bennett and the classy Swiss duo of Nicola Spirig and Daniela Ryf. Sweden's Lisa Norden is another with claims, though the Canberra based athlete is recovering from a heavy bicycle fall. Triathlon Australia head coach Shaun Stephens said the Australian contingent was in good shape heading into the first world championship race in a year when Olympic selection loomed.

"It's a long season but the preparations have gone well so far and hopefully we'll have a number of athletes in the mix," Stephens said. "You would have to think Snowy might be a little underdone, but you never discount someone of her class and spirit, Emma Moffatt is looking good and building into the season, and the likes of Under 23 world champion Emma Jackson and Annabel Luxford are capable of top 10 finishes.

"The men's field is tough to get a gauge on because there's so much talent across the board. But Brad (Kahlefeldt) and Brendan Sexton have some early runs on the board and Courtney Atkinson, while he's not near peak form yet, brings a wealth of experience to the table."

A couple of interested spectators will be on-course, in the form of Chris McCormack and Craig Alexander who, between them, have netted the last four Ironman World Championships in Hawaii. McCormack is in training to make the switch to Olympic distance competition in a bid to qualify for the London Olympics, while Alexander has remained in Sydney longer than usual to contest next month's Ironman Australia in Port Macquarie.

Sydney will show off its best assets, with the race to be beamed around the world. The swim will take place in Farm Cove, alongside the Sydney Opera House, the bike ride predominantly utilises the Cahill Expressway and Macquarie Street, while the run leg comprises a tight circuit along Macquarie and College streets to finish in Hyde Park.

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: 11.36am**

**Elite Men: 2.16pm**

For race information and event entry details, visit the official event website [www.sydney.com.au](http://www.sydney.com.au)

#### **For further information:**

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