

Media Release

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**SEXTON & JACKSON SET SIGHTS ON OLYMPIC JOURNEY**  
*Aussie young guns to push established stars on spectacular Sydney course*

The squeeze for Olympic berths in Australia's star-studded triathlon team ensures a number of sub-plots during the opening race of the 2011 Dextro Energy Triathlon ITU World Championship Series in Sydney.

And it seems Brendan Sexton and Emma Jackson are best placed to push the established stars in the April 10 event, which marks the start of a long campaign that will determine Olympic selection for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

With Emma Moffatt, Emma Snowsill, Brad Kahlefeldt and Courtney Atkinson having proven themselves time and again at top level, competition is fierce for what may well be just one spare spot in each of the men's and women's teams for London.

Sexton had shown tremendous promise in claiming silver at the 2007 Under 23 World Championships in Germany, but a horror run of injuries saw him off the pace in sporadic appearances over successive seasons. However, after a solid European summer and some strong early domestic form, the 25-year-old Victorian is back biting at the heels of the world's best. His last four starts in ITU-sanctioned races have resulted in a win, a DNF (did not finish) and back-to-back silver medals. Last weekend he pushed Kahlefeldt all the way in the ITU Mooloolaba World Cup, in what may prove a watershed performance.

"It's just great to be training again fully fit and knowing that you can give yourself every chance in a race," Sexton said. "I had a frustrating couple of years because triathlon can be a pretty unforgiving sport, but I started to string together some good races in Europe and that has given me a great confidence boost going into this season.

"To be right in the hunt in Mooloolaba was really pleasing, especially given the quality of the field, so hopefully I can bring that form with me for what should be a very exciting race in Sydney. I don't want to get ahead of myself – there's a long way to go this season and this world championship series represents the ultimate racing on a regular basis in our sport – but I need to start stepping up in top company if I'm to put myself in the frame for London. It will be tough . . . but I'm looking forward to it."

Kahlefeldt again appears to be the leading Australian hope in a field boasting world champions Javier Gomez (Spain) and Alistair Brownlee (Great Britain), along with Olympic champion Jan Frodeno (Germany), while Atkinson appears slightly off the pace at this early stage of the season.

Australia's emerging women have the toughest task in attempting to match Moffatt and Snowsill, who have five world championships between them, but Jackson is making eye-catching headway. The Queenslanders captured the Under 23 World Championship in Budapest last year at just 19 years of age, catapulting her into Olympic contention. However, a 25<sup>th</sup> place at last weekend's ITU Mooloolaba World Cup illustrated the significant jump to open elite competition.

“Mooloolaba was a tough race for me,” Jackson admitted. “I didn’t manage to get in the lead bike pack and it’s a hard race to work your way into if you’re not on the pace early, especially in a bit of rain. But that’s all part of the learning curve I’m on and hopefully I can learn from it.

“Last year was a big eye opener for me in terms of the massive difference between junior racing and open competition, so I at least feel as though I know what to expect this year. Obviously, I’ve still got a long way to go, but we’ve fast-tracked some goals and London is certainly on the radar. There’s no reason why I can’t keep improving and, if I do that, hopefully I’ll be in the mix for selection later in the year.”

With promising 2008 Olympian Erin Densham presently off the scene battling injury and health concerns, at this stage the third Olympic berth appears to be a battle between Jackson and the experienced Queensland duo of Annabel Luxford and Felicity Abram, who will both be on the start line in Sydney, along with Western Australia’s Felicity Sheedy-Ryan.

Moffatt continued her solid preparations with a second in Mooloolaba and is sure to set the pace alongside fellow favourites Barbara Riveros Diaz (Chile), Paula Findlay (Canada), Daniela Ryf (Switzerland), Andrea Hewitt (New Zealand) and Lisa Norden (Sweden). The class of Snowsill can never be discounted, despite the 2008 Olympic champion missing last weekend’s event with a minor heel complaint.

The Olympic Distance course offers a number of spectacular vantage points, with the athletes set to swim 1500 metres in Farm Cove, next to the Sydney Opera House, ride 40km on an eight-lap circuit along the Cahill Expressway and Macquarie Street, and run 10km along Macquarie and College streets before finishing 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:** 11.20am  
**Elite Men:** 2pm

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

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

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