



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

1 February 2010

### **Atkinson tipped to show young guns the way Abram returns after year long hiatus**

The Caloundra Triathlon will play host to some of Australia's best senior and junior talent this Sunday in the first of a two race Elite Series specifically designed for short sharp racing as part of the athlete's domestic racing program. Olympian and multiple national champion Courtney Atkinson is hoping some past experience will give him some edge in this Enduro format. Former world championship medallist Felicity Abram makes her return to the sport after a year long hiatus.

USM EVENTS in conjunction with the National Performance Director, Michael Flynn and National Head Coach Shaun Stephens devised the new two race series as part of the Gatorade Queensland Tri Series to provide strong competition for Australia's junior elite, Under 23 and Elite athletes as part of their training programme over some non-traditional formats.

"These events will form an integral part of our competition program moving forward. I believe some of the great success and depth of our talent pool in the late 90s and early 2000, can be attributed to this type of racing. It allows our young developing athletes to test themselves against the best in the world in short, fast and technically demanding events. The racing is sure to be extremely intense, highly competitive and very spectator friendly," said Stephens.

The Caloundra Triathlon will be the first race in the series; athletes will contest an Enduro format, short supersprint distance triathlon completed twice in succession.

Atkinson will spearhead the senior ranks and although not back in peak form as yet will head into Sunday's race as a favourite.

Atkinson is the only athlete in the field to have experienced this type of explosive racing when he competed in the Triathlon Grand Prix Series back in the '90's.

"I'm certainly not in top condition by any means just yet but it's great to see the return of this style of racing. It's been a long time since I competed but hopefully past experiences will hold me in good stead.

"It's great to be able to mix things up with racing and keep it interesting, but it will be anything but easy, it's just one speed all the way, flat out. I'm sure it's going to hurt but it will be a lot of fun and I'm looking forward to it," said Atkinson.

Atkinson will have to hold off a plethora of young talent, including James Seear who finished second to Atkinson at Noosa last year and his 'sometime' training partner Josh Amberger who was third. Round 4 winner of this series Josh McHugh and training partner Dane Robinson will be looking to continue their good early season form while Mike Lori, currently sitting in second spot on the Australian Junior Series ladder along with fellow juniors Aaron Royle, Shane Barrie, Jamie Huggett and Sam Appleton will all be looking to make their mark and stake a claim on the lucrative prize money up for grabs.

The local hopes, David Dellow, Tim George and Adam Fitzakerley will be hoping their inside knowledge of the course will play to their advantage.

Felicity Abram makes her return to triathlon after an extended break from the sport and says she is looking forward to getting back to racing.

"After Mooloolaba last year I decided to take time out of the sport, I needed to refresh and now I'm in a far better spot mentally and physically than I was.

"I'm lucky to have a new coach (Steve Moss) and a great training squad now and of course the AIS/QAS have been great in the support they give.

"I'm doing the World Champs series this year so Sydney (April 11) is the first big event for me this year.

"I'm nowhere near race ready for this weekend and I'm not expecting anything but a good training session. I hope I can keep up with younger fast girls who are used to this shorter distance cause I'm sure to be a bit rusty.

"This race format is definitely not my forte but a nice fun way to blow the cobwebs out after a year off. I'm thinking my training partner Emma Jackson is going to be the one to watch, little gun she is," said Abram.

The junior women are looking formidable on paper and may upstage the senior ranks.

2009 World silver medallist and Noosa Triathlon champion Emma Jackson will make her first race appearance for 2010 along with former two-time world silver medallist Ashleigh Gentle, Victoria's Holly Aitken and Ellie Salthouse who just claimed the one coveted Oceania spot to compete at the 2010 Youth Olympics with her second placing at the qualification race in Canberra two weeks ago. Gentle currently leads the Australian Junior Championship Series after two rounds with Aitken in second and Salthouse third.



The Caloundra Triathlon is the fifth race of the Gatorade Queensland Tri Series, last years' event attracted 1700 competitors, the largest in the series history with 2010 figures expected to exceed 2000.

**Race 5 Distances:**

QTS	400m swim   15km cycle   4km run
NAB Enticer	200m swim   5km cycle   2km run
The Courier-Mail Kool Kids	100m swim   2km cycle   400m run
Workplace Teams Tri	400m swim   15km cycle   4km run

**Elite ENDURO Race**

- Swim 1: 300m (deep water start; beach exit)
- Cycle 1: 7km (5 laps x 1400m)
- Run 1: 1800m (5 laps x 360m)
  
- Swim 2: 250m (triangle course; beach entry/exit)
- Cycle 2: 7km (5 laps x 1400m)
- Run 2: 1800m (5 laps x 360m)

**Timetable**

6.45am	<b>START</b> The Courier-Mail Kool Kids NAB Enticer Gatorade QTS
9.35am	<b>START</b> - ELITE ENDURO Female
10.25am	<b>START</b> - ELITE ENDURO Male

**Prize money – (equal Male/Female)**

1 <sup>st</sup>	\$4000
2 <sup>nd</sup>	\$3000
3 <sup>rd</sup>	\$2000
4 <sup>th</sup>	\$1000
5 <sup>th</sup>	\$500

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