



**ITU
WORLD TRIATHLON
ABU DHABI**

**EVENT PROGRAMME
3 – 4 MARCH 2017
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 **Abu Dhabi**
Sports Council
مجلس أبوظبي الرياضي

WELCOME

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Abu Dhabi for the 2017 edition of the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi, to be staged on the iconic Yas Island.

Firstly, my congratulations to all the athletes on the start line! Whether you're a seasoned triathlete, just embarking on a triathlon for the first time, or one of the professional athletes taking part in the elite race, I have huge admiration for you and we'll be supporting you every step of the way.

Triathlon forms a central pivot within our Sports Council mandate and resonates with everything we are trying hard to achieve. The sport encourages people from all walks of life - irrespective of age, gender, nationality or ability - to search for that wonderful sense of achievement and to adopt a healthier lifestyle. It also provides us with the economic catalyst of bringing in keen amateur and elite athletes from all over the world, as well as hosting an international broadcast that promotes Abu Dhabi and Yas Island to the watching world.

This year the event will take place over two days. We've increased the village activities and encourage all athletes and their supporters to enjoy the whole day with us and join us in supporting the world's best triathletes at 3.55pm on both days.

One of our 2017 goals is to target a 60% increase in youth participation. To this end, we have left the children's registration window open for longer than usual so if you have any budding triathletes in your family then please contact the staff and sign them up!

Please join me in sharing your experiences at @WTSAbuDhabi and using the hashtags #WTSAbuDhabi #InAbuDhabi.



Finally my thanks to the International Triathlon Union for their continued support, to our management team at Worldsport and to Miral for providing us with such a brilliant venue.

Good luck and race well!

HIS EXCELLENCY
AREF HAMAD AL AWANI
General Secretary of
Abu Dhabi Sports Council


Abu Dhabi
Sports Council
مجلس أبوظبي الرياضي

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WELCOME

Greetings and welcome to the 2017 ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi.

I'm thrilled to return to Abu Dhabi for the World Triathlon Series for the third year. In 2015, the inaugural race marked the first time the World Triathlon Series touched down in the Middle East. Being able to organize a triathlon of this magnitude and importance here in Abu Dhabi is not only extremely important for the continued development of the sport in the UAE, but also serves as a cornerstone accomplishment for all of the Middle East.

For the third consecutive year, Abu Dhabi will be the opening event of the WTS season, which means it will set the tone for the entire season. This year, once again the elites will be treated to a standard distance event, but this year Abu Dhabi is presenting a brand new course on Abu Dhabi's iconic Yas Island that is sure to excite those competing and those spectating.

The triathlon races will not end with elites, with the weekend including something for triathlon enthusiasts of all ages and speeds. This weekend there are sprint, standard and maxi distance events on offer to provide everyone with the perfect challenge. Abu Dhabi has also committed to seeing our great sport grown amongst its youth by organizing kids and youth races.

The vibrant city of Abu Dhabi, and its iconic Yas Island, provides the perfect backdrop for these events during an excellent weekend of family-friendly sports action for its citizens. After all, triathlon is a sport anyone can do regardless of age or gender.



I would like to thank our partners at Abu Dhabi Sports Council for their continued support and dedication to growing the sport of triathlon here. Thank you also to the UAE Triathlon Federation, the Local Organising Committee, and the city of Abu Dhabi for helping to put this weekend together.

Overall, enjoy Abu Dhabi's incredible Yas Island and the spectacle of ITU triathlon. Have a wonderful weekend and 2017 season.

Sincerely,

MARISOL CASADO

President, International Triathlon Union
IOC Member



/WTSAbuDhabi



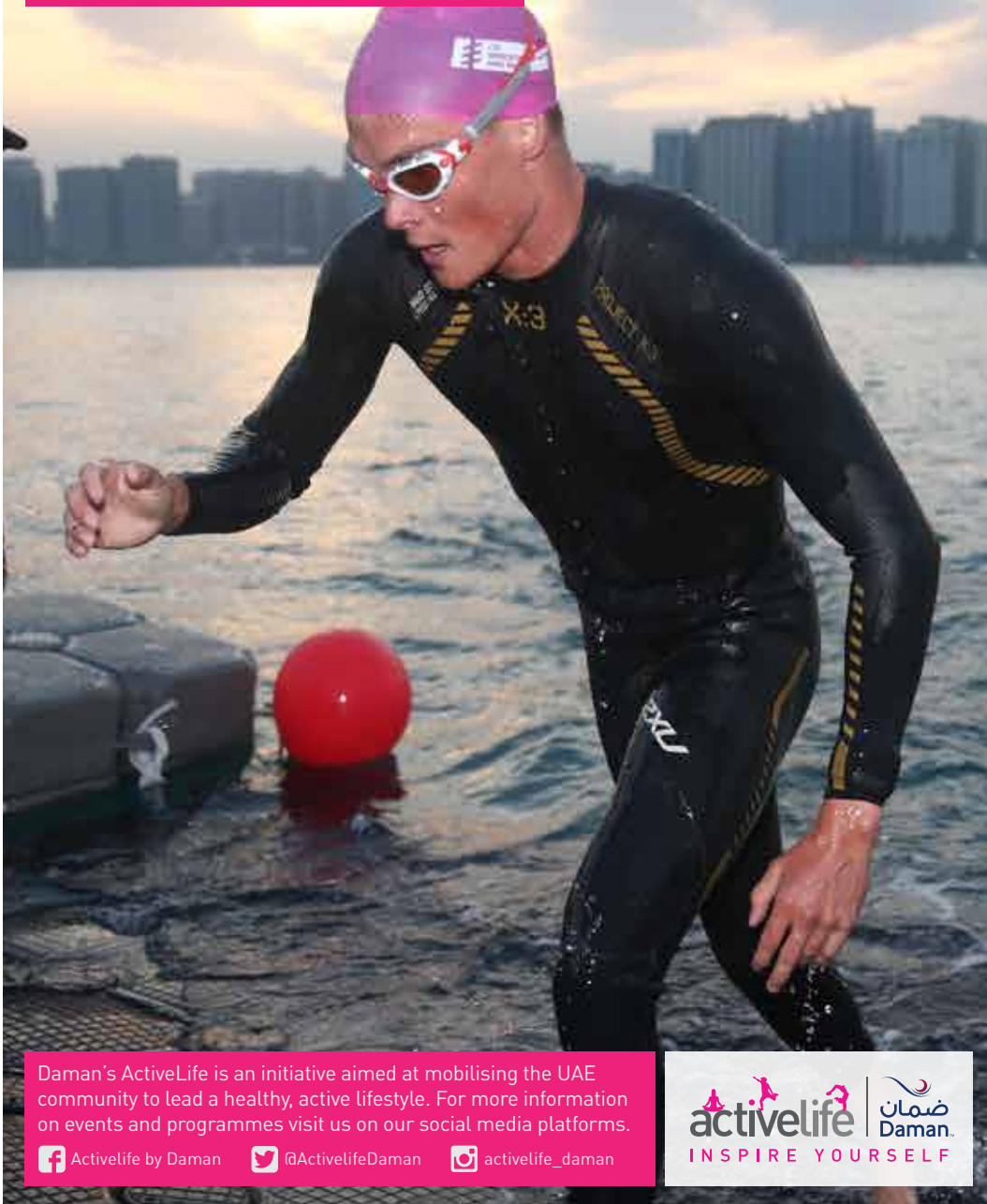
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DISCOVER YAS ISLAND

It is the third year that Abu Dhabi has hosted the ITU World Series Triathlon, and in 2017 the event is held on the iconic Yas Island for the very first time. The truly unique course winds around some of the island's most famous landmarks, including Yas Marina, Yas Marina Circuit, Ferrari World and Yas Waterworld.

There truly is something for everyone - from unforgettable attractions and live concerts with the world's top performers, to traditional Emirati hospitality and pristine beaches overlooking waters of the Arabian Gulf.

EVENTS

From the annual Formula 1™ Abu Dhabi Grand Prix to live concerts and theatrical performances at world-class venues such as Du Arena, Yas Island's calendar is jam-packed with unforgettable experiences. In fact, on Thursday 2 March, the island will play host to rock legend, Rod Stewart - all ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi participants will receive a 15% discount on their concert ticket!

HOSPITALITY

Guests staying on Yas Island are spoiled for choice thanks to a wide range of top hotels and apartments. There's everything from family-friendly venues to five-star indulgent luxury for rest, relaxation and fun.

DINING

With over 160 restaurants on Yas Island, there's something to delight every appetite!



If you're participating in the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi, don't forget to check your race pack for discount dining vouchers for some of the island's best restaurants.

LIFESTYLE

Get the adrenaline pumping at Yas Waterworld and Ferrari World, book a day at one of the island's spas, chill out on the white sands of Yas Beach or play a round of golf at Yas Links. If you're competing, don't miss the preferential green fees at Yas Links, or the incredible 50% discount for yourself and your friends at Yas Waterworld and Ferrari World.

SHOPPING

The UAE is famed for its incredible retail, and Yas Island is no exception! Yas Mall is the place to shop until you drop, packed full of the latest trends, from local boutiques to international high street and designer brands.

ITU WORLD TRIATHLON ABU DHABI WHAT TO EXPECT

Are you ready for one of the most spectacular triathlon races in the world? This year's ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi is taking place over two action-packed days on Yas Island on the weekend of March 3 and 4, 2017. It welcomes a star-studded line-up of elite professional triathletes and amateur competitors to swim, cycle and run around the incredible course, as well as an abundance of entertainment for the whole family in the Race Village.

Hosted by Abu Dhabi Sports Council, the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi is the first race of the ITU World Triathlon Series, which sees the professionals competing for the title of World Champion on a nine-stop circuit that also includes the Gold Coast, Yokohama, Leeds, Hamburg, Edmonton, Montreal, Stockholm and the Grand Final in Rotterdam. The stellar men's and women's fields include Olympic medallists, reigning World Champions and world-record holders, many of whom are already looking towards the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

Amateur triathletes can look forward to an unforgettable experience, with races divided into age groups and distances so there is something for all levels and abilities. Open to individuals and relay teams of two or three competitors, course options include the Sprint, Olympic and Maxi distances, promising an exciting challenge for seasoned pros and first-time triathletes alike.

A true family affair, this year also sees the return of the Junior Races. Aimed to get children active and having fun, there are six junior categories for competitors aged five to 15.

There is also an abundance of family-friendly entertainment in the Race Village, including delicious food and drink, the Daman's ActiveLife kid's inflatable area, climbing walls, competitions, an official merchandise store, sports activities and much more! The ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi is truly a fun-packed weekend for the whole family.



SCHEDULE

WED 1 MARCH

TIME*	ACTIVITY	VENUE
07.30 - 20.00	Information desk open	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
08.00	Running training session (5km or 10km)	Info Tent, Athlete Village
10.30	Elite athlete press conference	Yas Viceroy
12.00 - 20.00	Athlete Village and Expo opens	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
12.00 - 20.00	Age group registration (all categories)	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
16.00	Cycling training session (30km)	Info Tent, Athlete Village

THURS 2 MARCH

07.30 - 20.00	Information desk open	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
08.00	Cycling training session (30km)	Info Tent, Athlete Village
12.00 - 20.00	Athlete Village and Expo opens	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
12.00 - 20.00	Age group registration (all categories)	Athlete Village, Yas Plaza
14.15 - 16.00	Pasta party (14.15) & race briefing (15.00)	Galaxy Ballroom, Radisson Blu
16.00	Running training session (5km or 10km)	Info Tent, Athlete Village
17.15 - 19.00	Pasta party (17.15) & race briefing (19.00)	Galaxy Ballroom, Radisson Blu

FRI 3 MARCH

06.30 - 19.30	Athlete / Race Village and Expo opens	Race Village, Yas Marina
06.42	Sunrise	
08.00 - 08.10	Mini 1km (5 - 8 years)	Race Village, Yas Marina
08.15 - 08.55	Kids Duathlon (7 - 9, 10 - 11 years)	Race Village, Yas Marina
08.45	Mini 1km Prize Giving	Race Village, Yas Marina
09.00 - 09.30	Junior Duathlon (12 - 13, 14 - 15 years)	Race Village, Yas Marina
09.30 - 10.45	Junior Tri Super Sprint (12 - 13, 14 - 15 years)	Race Village, Yas Marina
10.45 - 11.45	Prize Giving: Junior races	Race Village, Yas Marina
10.50	Age group and school sprint race (2 hour 15 min cut off)	Race Village, Yas Marina
12.00 - 18.00	Age group registration (Olympic and Maxi)	Race Village, Yas Marina
14.00	Prize Giving: Age group and school sprint	Race Village, Yas Marina
14.30 - 15.30	Age group race briefing: Olympic and Maxi	Race Village, Yas Marina
15.55	Elite Female Olympic race followed immediately by awards ceremony	Race Village, Yas Marina
18.25	Sunset	
18.30	Athlete / Race Village and Expo closes	Race Village, Yas Marina

SAT 4 MARCH

05.30	Athlete / Race Village and Expo opens	Race Village, Yas Marina
06.42	Sunrise	
07.00	Age group Maxi race (6 hour cut off)	Race Village, Yas Marina
08.00	Age group Olympic race (4 hour cut off)	Race Village, Yas Marina
14.00 - 14.30	Prize-giving: Age group Olympic distance	Race Village, Yas Marina
14.30 - 15.00	Prize-giving: Age group maxi distance	Race Village, Yas Marina
15.55	Elite Male Olympic race followed immediately by awards ceremony	Race Village, Yas Marina
18.30	Event closes	Race Village, Yas Marina

* Times and venues subject to change. Please check abudhabi.triathlon.org



ABU DHABI SPORTS COUNCIL, UNITING THE EMIRATE THROUGH SPORT

Sport can have a profound and positive impact on individuals, communities and society as a whole. Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC) is committed to bringing the world's top sporting events to the emirate, while supporting Abu Dhabi's homegrown sporting talent and facilities and fostering a healthy and inclusive society in which sport plays an integral role.

Supporting ADSC's vision, Abu Dhabi's sporting infrastructure is second-to-none, from three award-winning championship golf courses to world-class football stadiums, the state-of-the-art Zayed Cricket Stadium, the extensive Corniche and promenade, and of course - Yas Island, home to the 2017 ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi.

The emirate has already achieved many milestones on both the local and international sporting scenes. Key events which welcome sporting stars and thousands of dedicated fans from across the world include the annual F1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the highly successful Volvo Ocean Race and the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship. Now in its third year, the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi takes the emirate to the heart of the international triathlon community, while the Abu Dhabi Tour embraces cycling's growing popularity and influence in the region. Recent FINA events put Abu Dhabi onto the aquatic sporting map, while the World Professional Jiu-Jitsu Championship has made the emirate a household name within this martial art, reaching as far as Brazil and Japan.

Last year, the emirate hosted the first ever Fatima Bint Mubarak Ladies Open women's professional golf tournament - with a prize fund of over AED 2 million. It attracted an elite line-up of female professional golfers,

and underlined the importance of sport in creating equal opportunities and inspiring more young women into the sporting arena.

Abu Dhabi is also set to play a hosting role in the 2017 and 2018 FIFA Club World Cup, following its success in 2009 and 2010. Following that, the UAE will then play host to the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019, which will be largest football event ever held in the country.

ADSC continues to support and nurture budding local talent and grassroots sporting initiatives. Working with schools, colleges, universities and local sports clubs, the organisation is empowering the next generation to learn, get involved and perhaps become the sports stars of the future. Successful initiatives include the HSBC Future Falcons programme, which has introduced over 2,000 youngsters to golf, while the number of local Emirati residents who volunteer at events such as the Mubadala World Tennis Championship and F1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix is growing each year. Homegrown sports stars are being talked about worldwide including UAE athletes Nader Al Bedwawi, Aisha Al Bahulshi and Yousif Mirza who competed at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and have come together to form a team competing in this year's ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi!



"Is there more to do? Always," says His Excellency Aref Hamad Al Awani, General Secretary of ADSC. "We are never complacent and you can never take your foot off the pedal with sport – we have to sustain the momentum. We aim to also support and help nurture sporting excellence and create local sporting heroes who participate and succeed on the international stage. These will be role models for our population. They reinforce the value of sport and engender significant national pride."

Sport has a significant impact on Abu Dhabi's economy. It generates revenue, both through the events themselves and increased revenue for related support industries, from more flights being booked and increased hotel occupancy rates thanks to an influx of visitors, to a spike in revenue for event organisers and ancillary suppliers. The Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship alone brings around AED147 million of economic impact to the greater UAE each year. Sport also opens up a world of opportunities for UAE nationals, from careers in the sports industry to more opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses serving the sporting community.

"We also appreciate that sport is a business – a big business – and it can open up a world of career opportunities for UAE nationals – and not just those who want to demonstrate their prowess on the sports field, but the many ancillary jobs behind the scenes, in events organisation, marketing and also the financial arena – people with a passion for sport could find their niche

here," says His Excellency. "Sport will also open opportunities for Emirati entrepreneurs – it was an Emirati, for instance, who started the cycling tours in Abu Dhabi and another Emirati is behind the kayaking tours of the Eastern Mangroves – they are involved in sports and tourism while satisfying their entrepreneurial spirit and we want to encourage more of that."

Looking towards the future, ADSC will continue to build upon Abu Dhabi's sporting legacy, in line with the city's 2030 vision - embracing contemporary living with respect for the many cultures residing in the emirate, strengthening a sense of community, building social cohesion and promoting a healthy lifestyle among residents of all ages and abilities.

"From a lifestyle perspective, it's commonly accepted that regular exercise improves health and fitness," adds His Excellency. "Remember, that health is defined as a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being it's not merely the absence of illness. Sport improves confidence, helps relieve stress and tension, is great for keeping weight in check, improves posture and is a great social environment and aids intercultural awareness when competition is on an international level. Competing against people from other cultures, breaks down barriers and leads to better understanding of each other. Sport also leads to great inclusiveness within the community – look at the success of the Para-Olympics for instance, and I'm pleased to say that Abu Dhabi does have great facilities for people with special needs as well as dedicated facilities for girls and women. These benefits then feed into society with significant savings and reduced pressure on health services and the development of a socially-aware and inclusive society."

ELITE WOMEN'S FIELD

NAME/YEAR OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	WTS RANKING
ANASTASIA ABROSIMOVA 1990	RUS	17
JOLANDA ANNEN 1992	SUI	26
GILLIAN BACKHOUSE 1991	AUS	49
ALICE BETTO 1987	ITA	NO RANKING
EMMIE CHARAYRON 1990	FRA	33
SUMMER COOK 1991	USA	19
FLORA DUFFY 1987	BER	1
VENDULA FRINTOVA 1983	CZE	12
ANDREA HEWITT 1982	NZL	6
JURI IDE 1983	JPN	46
KIRSTEN KASPER 1991	USA	15
RACHEL KLAMER 1990	NED	11
AOI KURAMOTO 1988	JPN	82
PETRA KURIKOVA 1991	CZE	80
INDIA LEE 1988	GBR	76
YURIE MATSUDA 1987	JPN	36
CHARLOTTE MCSHANE 1990	AUS	8
LISA PERTERER 1991	AUT	41
CLAUDIA RIVAS 1989	MEX	45
CAROLINA ROUTIER 1990	ESP	27
GILLIAN SANDERS 1981	RSA	43
MELANIE SANTOS 1995	POR	39
MARIYA SHORETS 1990	RUS	21
REBECCA SPENCE 1988	NZL	40
JODIE STIMPSON 1989	GBR	7
YUKO TAKAHASHI 1991	JPN	34
RENEE TOMLIN 1988	USA	18
SARAH TRUE 1981	USA	9
AI UEDA 1983	JPN	3
SARA VILIC 1992	AUT	24
KATIE ZAFERES 1989	USA	4



AN ALL-STAR LINE-UP STARTS THE SEASON

Women from 19 different countries across the world will compete in this year's elite race at the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi, including seven out of the world's 10 top female triathletes. The impressive line-up includes Abu Dhabi's reigning champion, Great Britain's Jodie Stimpson, who has been training hard ahead of the new season, honing her swimming technique and power cycling.

Stimpson will be defending her title against Bermuda's Flora Duffy, 2016 World Champion; world no. three, Ai Ueda from Japan; US Olympians Katie Zaferes and Sarah True; world no. six, Andrea Hewitt from New Zealand; and world no. eight Australia's Charlotte McShane.

Together, these seven women boast 71 wins between them!

The challengers will be going head-to-head on the all-new Yas Island course. Missing from this year's line-up is Rio gold medallist Gwen Jorgensen, who is taking time off to have a baby. Flying the flag for their native USA are Katie Zaferes and Sarah True, who both rank in the top 10 and are keen to start the season as they mean to go on. Other ones to watch include US triathlete Summer Cook, named ITU Women's Breakout Star in 2016, and Japanese triathlete Ai Ueda, who took home four gold medals during the 2016 season.

Don't miss the world's best women go head-to-head on Friday 3 March, at 15.55.



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MEET THE PROFESSIONALS



JODIE STIMPSON

Having learnt to swim aged four at her local swimming club in Oldbury, UK, Jodie Stimpson discovered a love of competing from an early age. She was introduced to triathlon by her uncle at the age of eight, and it wasn't long before she realised her potential, winning her first ever competition just one year later. The defending ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi champion broke onto the international scene in 2009, winning the British Triathlon Super Series three times in a row, before taking gold as part of the GB team at the World Mixed Relay Championship in 2011. In 2014, she became a double gold winner at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, individually and as part of the mixed GB team.



FLORA DUFFY

Born and raised in Bermuda, Flora Duffy began her triathlon career aged seven. She became one to watch after taking eighth place at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Australia, followed by a series of top 10 finishes on the ITU World Triathlon Series circuit. She qualified for the Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympics, is a three times XTERRA World Champion and two times ITU Cross Triathlon World Champion. In 2016, she was crowned ITU World Champion. Renowned for her skills on the bike, she is one to watch on the new course which includes some technical bike sections! She says, "I never play it safe when I'm racing and with such a technical bike course, I'm ready to take it to the rest of the field! I'd love to kick off my 2017 season with a win!"



AI UEDA

Born and raised in Kyoto, Ai Ueda is known as 'Iron Girl' in her native Japan. She began competing by chance aged 14, when she became a record holder when participating in the EKIDEN race while at elementary school. Her career as an elite triathlete began in 2003 after being crowned Junior Asian Champion a year before. A crowd favourite, Ueda was ranked first in Japan in 2005, winning gold at the Japan Championships in 2007, and coming from behind to walk away with the trophy at the Asian Triathlon Championships in 2008. She represented her country at the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games.



SUMMER COOK

Named ITU Women's Breakout Star in 2016, Summer Cook turned pro in March 2014 for the Clermont Elite Development Race in her native USA. A member of USA Triathlon's National Team, she trains with The Triathlon Squad in Poway, California. The following year, she won two Continental Cups and earned her first World Cup podium in Alanya, Turkey. Her season last year was highlighted by three ITU wins, including WTS Edmonton, the Chengdu World Cup, and the Tongyeong World Cup. With five ITU podium finishes last year, and race-leading swims and runs, she is expected to be a top competitor among a strong American team.



KATIE ZAFERES

Originally from Hampstead, Maryland, but now based in California, American triathlete Katie Zaferes started competing after graduating from university in 2012. Since then, she has travelled the world as an elite triathlete, representing the US in the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. She won her first World Triathlon Series race in Hamburg, and finished in the top five of the series in both 2015 and 2016. She is currently looking forward to training through another Olympic cycle and hopes to compete in Tokyo 2020.



National الإسعاف الوطني Ambulance



يقدم الإسعاف الوطني خدمات الإسعاف والرعاية الطبية الطارئة ضمن أعلى مستويات الجودة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، كما يوفر التغطية الإسعافية للأحداث والفعاليات العامة في الدولة من خلال طواقم مختصة. ويفخر الإسعاف الوطني بدعمه لبطولة أبوظبي الدولية للترياثلون، وتأمين سلامة الرياضيين المشاركين متمنين لهم التوفيق والنجاح في هذا التحدي الرياضي المميز.

يحرص الإسعاف الوطني بشكل يومي على دعم الصحة والسلامة العامة، ويعتز بدوره المستمر في دعم الفعاليات والأنشطة الرياضية بالدولة.

National Ambulance provides quality ambulance services and medical emergency care in the UAE. Our specialised team also provides medical coverage at public events, such as the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi taking place here in the nation's capital. We salute all the athletes participating in the race and are proud to support them in their challenge to be the best they can.

National Ambulance makes a significant daily contribution to public health and safety and is proud to support the sporting community.



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ELITE MEN'S FIELD

NAME/YEAR OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	WTS RANKING
FERNANDO ALARZA 1991	ESP	3
MOHAMAD ALSABBAGH 1990	SYR	NO RANKING
MIGUEL ARRAILOLOS 1988	POR	84
MARC AUSTIN 1994	GBR	NO RANKING
FILIFE AZEVEDO 1993	POR	NO RANKING
MATTHEW BAKER 1994	AUS	106
LÉO BERGERE 1996	FRA	104
GREGORY BILLINGTON 1989	USA	35
THOMAS BISHOP 1991	GBR	42
KRISTIAN BLUMMENFELT 1994	NOR	11
ADAM BOWDEN 1982	GBR	9
ADRIEN BRIFFOD 1994	SUI	74
DAVID CASTRO FAJARDO 1993	ESP	60
JAN CELUSTKA 1982	CZE	40
DORIAN CONINX 1994	FRA	30
SIMON DE CUYPER 1986	BEL	122
DOMEN DORNIK 1991	SLO	NO RANKING
LAWRENCE FANOUS 1985	JOR	165
SYLVAIN FRIDELANCE 1995	SUI	158
HENRIK GOESCH 1994	FIN	138
JAVIER GOMEZ NOYA 1983	ESP	58
CRISANTO GRAJALES 1987	MEX	7
LUKAS HOLLAUS 1986	AUT	103
YUICHI HOSODA 1984	JPN	136
GUSTAV IDEN 1996	NOR	102
IVAN IVANOV 1989	UKR	83
BEN KANUTE 1992	USA	76
ALOIS KNABL 1992	AUT	87
MENNO KOOLHAAS 1995	NED	NO RANKING
PIERRE LE CORRE 1990	FRA	8
DAVID LUIS 1995	POR	NO RANKING
VINCENT LUIS 1989	FRA	NO RANKING
AHMAD MARDENLI	SYR	NO RANKING
MOHAMAD MASOO 1993	SYR	NO RANKING
MARIO MOLA 1990	ESP	1
RICHARD MURRAY 1989	RSA	5
JOAO PEREIRA 1987	POR	12
LUKAS PERTL 1995	AUT	113
DMITRY POLYANSKIY 1986	RUS	16
IGOR POLYANSKIY 1990	RUS	29
ILYA PROSOLOV 1994	RUS	114
AURELIEN RAPHAEL 1988	FRA	14
ANDREA SALVISBERG 1989	SUI	22
HENRI SCHOEMAN 1991	RSA	4

NAME/YEAR OF BIRTH	COUNTRY	WTS RANKING
JONAS SCHOMBURG 1994	ITU	39
GRANT SHELDON 1994	GBR	58
JOAO SILVA 1989	POR	32
THOMAS SPRINGER 1984	AUT	48
WIAN SULLWALD 1993	RSA	112
TEMIRLAN TEMIROV 1996	KAZ	NO RANKING
TAMÁS TÓTH 1989	HUN	37
DAVIDE UCCELLARI 1991	ITA	57
MARCO VAN DER STEL 1991	NED	64
JORIK VAN EGDOM 1995	NED	165
MARCEL WALKINGTON 1993	AUS	127
STEFAN ZACHAEUS 1990	LUX	43
JONATHAN ZIPF 1986	GER	26



THE TITANS OF TRIATHLON PREPARE FOR BATTLE

With a line-up that includes Olympic medallists, world-record holders and world champions, 58 of triathlon's leading male athletes will be battling it out on 4 March. Between them, this year's elite competitors have recorded a combined total of 282 wins on the World Triathlon Series circuit, not to mention 600 podium places, making this one of the strongest Abu Dhabi line-ups in the history of the event.

Four of the world's top five athletes are Abu Dhabi-bound to compete for glory in this year's event: 2016 World Champion, Spain's Mario Mola; Portugal's Olympian and world no. three Joao Silva; South Africa's Olympic bronze medallist and world

no. four Henri Schoeman; and fellow South African and world no. five Richard Murray. They are joined by crowd favourite, Javier Gomez, the five-time World Champion and Olympic silver medallist who missed out on the 2016 race in Abu Dhabi due to scheduling conflicts.

Double-defending champion, Mario Mola, will be targeting a hat-trick in what is going to be the first race of the WTS season, while 25-year-old rising star Fernando Alarza, who clinched his first Series victory in Cape Town last year, will no doubt be eyeing the Abu Dhabi winners' podium.

Don't miss the world's best men go head-to-head on Saturday 4 March, at 15.55.



THE MEN

MEET THE PROFESSIONALS



JAVIER GÓMEZ NOYA

Spanish triathlete Javier Gómez Noya took up the sport at the age of 15 after previously competing in both swimming and football. From 2002 to 2010, he took part in 57 ITU competitions, achieving 54 top ten positions and 23 first-place finishes. He was crowned ITU Triathlon World Champion in 2003 and 2008, and Elite European Champion in 2007 and 2009. In 2008, he represented Spain at the Beijing Olympics, narrowly missing out on a medal to come in fourth overall. At the London Olympic Games in 2012, he won silver in the men's triathlon. "I'm especially psyched to make my Abu Dhabi comeback on the new course on Yas Island," he says. "It is to my advantage that this year the course is new to all of us, so the gold medal is there for the taking!"

MARIO MOLA

Born in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, Mario Mola rode a racing bike for the first time shortly after turning 15, and made his triathlon debut in the summer of 2005. Since then, he's participated in countless national and international triathlons, as well as finishing second in the World Cross Country Championships. He realised his dream of representing Spain at the 2012 London Olympics, the youngest triathlete in the competition. Throughout last season he was a podium regular, as well as taking eighth place at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. He says, "Nothing challenges me as much as having a powerful line-up at a competition. I can't wait to start my season toeing the line with Gomez, Alarza, Murray and Schoeman."

HENRI SCHOEMAN

Hailing from Durban, South Africa, Henri Schoeman took up triathlon as a teenager, winning the Under-19 South African championship. As an elite triathlete, he won silver for his country at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and the following year won the ITU Cape Town Africa Cup and the African Continental Champs in Egypt, as well as placing in the top ten at WTS Stockholm, Hamburg and Auckland. 2016 was his best year yet, which saw him taking bronze at 2016's Rio Olympics and gaining his first ITU WTS victory. He says, "Abu Dhabi is always an important race because it is the first one on the calendar, and this year I'm especially amped to check out the new course."



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RICHARD MURRAY

Born in Cape Town, Richard Murray entered adult tri in 2009, was the Under-23 African champion in both triathlon and duathlon in 2010, and was the elite African triathlon champion in 2011 and 2012. He gained his first win in the ITU World Triathlon Series in Hamburg in 2012. He has represented his country twice at the Olympic Games, placing 17th in 2012, and fourth in 2016. He won the Grand Final of WTS in Chicago in 2015, and was crowned winner of the ITU Duathlon World Championships in Asturias, Spain, in 2016. "Abu Dhabi is one of my favourite races on the calendar, partly because it is the season opener and so helps me understand where I stand after the off-season training, and partly because it is one of the most scenic races," he says.



FERNANDO ALARZA

Spanish triathlete Fernando Alarza entered the world of competitive triathlon when he was 16, joining his local team, CD Tritalavera. Several years later he joined the Spanish National Triathlon Team to compete internationally. In 2010, he took the coveted Junior Triathlon World Championship Series. 2012 was a particularly good year for Alarza, which saw him winning the Garmin Barcelona Triathlon Championship, Spain Duathlon and Campeonato de España Triathlon, as well as being the ITU U23 World Triathlon Grand Final Silver Medalist.



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GIVE IT A TRI!

It's no wonder triathlon is known as one of the world's most inclusive sports. Welcoming all ages and abilities, triathletes come from all walks of life. Meet some of the competitors who will be taking part in ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi this year.



MOHAMMED KASIM,
UAE

EXPERIENCE: No triathlon experience
GOALS FOR #WTSABUDHABI: Complete my first triathlon!

triathlon!

"In 2014 I weighted over 197kg and had two surgeries on my left knee because of my weight. After one year of hard training, I lost over 100kg and became a much stronger person. At the start of 2017 I was searching for a new, big goal to achieve, to inspire more people to lead a healthy lifestyle, and signed up for the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi. Nothing is impossible - just work hard to reach your goal!"

Watch Mohammed race in the Age Group Olympic on Saturday 4 March from 08.00.

LUNA PEREZ, Germany

EXPERIENCE: Luna, 10, has lots of triathlons under her belt and convinced her mum, Katja, to try her first in February 2017

"I can't wait for ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi - I won my last race so I'm hoping to get another medal! It's even better having my mum racing as well."

Watch Luna race in the Kids Duathlon on Friday 3 March from 08.15.

Watch Katja race in the Age Group Sprint on Friday 3 March from 10.50.



ASHLEY POPHAM, UK

EXPERIENCE: 3 sprint triathlons
GOALS FOR #WTSABUDHABI: Complete an Olympic distance for the first time!

"I loved the atmosphere when I did the sprint at ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi two years ago - so I thought it would be the perfect event to step up to the longer distance. The crowds and watching the elite athletes racing in the afternoon keep me inspired!"

Watch Ashley race in the Age Group Olympic on Saturday 4 March from 08.00.



NADER AL BEDWAWI, AISHA AL BAHULSHI AND YOUSIF MIRZA, UAE

EXPERIENCE: UAE Olympians in swimming, weight-lifting and cycling

TRIATHLON EXPERIENCE: No triathlon experience

GOALS FOR #WTSABUDHABI: To come together as a UAE Olympian team and complete the Team Sprint

"I've always liked a challenge and triathlon is been a sport I've been very keen to try out for a while. Since my return from Rio I've had a growing urge to help encourage UAE's youth to get active and try different sports." **UAE Olympic swimmer, Nader Al Bedwawi**

"Triathlon is an achievable challenge that helps you test your limits and see what you're capable of. If I've learnt anything from Rio it is to push myself. You'd be surprised what you can accomplish." **UAE Olympic weight-lifter, Aisha Al Balooshi (pictured above)**

"I'd never turn down the opportunity to cycle around Yas Island. One of the most enjoyable things about cycling is the course and I couldn't ask for a more beautiful course to do my first triathlon." **UAE Olympic cyclist, Yousif Mirza**
Watch Nader, Aisha and Yousif race in the Age Group Sprint on Friday 3 March from 10.50.

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FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY!

Triathlon isn't just for the grown ups! ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi has five races aimed at budding triathletes aged five and up. It's a fantastic family day out, designed to get kids moving, have lots of fun and feel inspired by some of the sport's top stars.

Elite triathlete Henri Schoeman, explains why kids should try triathlon: "The sport helps kids make friends with good habits," he says, adding, "It's also very important to have lots of fun while you're training."

His fellow South African, Abdul Rowland, is already a veteran at the age of 15, having taken part in 15 triathlons over the last year alone. An Abu Dhabi resident, he's been training at TrainYAS ahead of this year's ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi.

"Every time I compete, I try to improve my times from previous events and this usually motivates me to train harder," he says. Like Schoeman, he says it's important to focus on having fun. "The only person you are really competing with is yourself, so you might as well enjoy it!"

What are you waiting for? Get involved in the action on 3 March!



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