

For Immediate Release
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Phuket, Thailand

Intense Contest Ahead at 2011 Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship

Surges in Entries of Almost 30% Reflects Laguna Phuket's Booming International Triathlon Stature



Two-time Ironman 70.3 world champion Michael Raelert of Germany heads a stellar pro field at the 2011 Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship.

High resolution image available at:
http://www.lagunaphuket.com/media-hub/imagegalleries/MediaReleases/306/Michael_Raelert.jpg



Current Ironman 70.3 world champion Melissa Rollison of Australia is looking to add to her 2011 title tally at Laguna Phuket.

High resolution image available at:
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Two-time Ironman 70.3 world champion Michael Raelert of Germany and current Ironman 70.3 world champion Australian Melissa Rollison lead an elite pro athlete line-up chasing World Championship points in the 2011 Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship at Laguna Phuket on Sunday, 4 December.

They join a huge field of age group triathletes from all over the world who have converged on the Thai paradise island to compete for coveted World Championship qualifying slots.

In only its second year, the Laguna race offers an impressive 1,500 qualifying points for pros and 30 age group qualifying slots for the 2012 Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii, as well as 45 slots for the 2012 Ironman 70.3 World Championship in Las Vegas.

The points and slots on offer are reflected in a surge of almost 30 per cent in overall entries compared to last year's inaugural race.

The 2011 Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship has registered 1,054 individual entries - including 19 male and 15 female pros - and 21 relay teams, giving a total of 1,117 competitors from 58 countries.

In 2010, the total was 812 competitors from 51 countries, with 764 individual entries and 16 relay teams.

This year's number includes 125 pro and age groupers who competed in last weekend's Laguna Phuket Triathlon (LPT) and stayed on the island for the week-long Tri-Fest leading up to this weekend's race.

The Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship is one of only a small number of worldwide Ironman 70.3 triathlons offering 2012 Kona and Las Vegas slots and the only one in Asia Pacific.

Its points and slots opportunities - together with the unique challenges of iconic swim, bike and run courses - has drawn triathletes from all over the world for what is certain to be an intensely competitive contest.

The pro line-up includes Ironman legends Chris Lieto of the USA, Faris Al-Sultan of Germany, Australia's Belinda Granger, and Natascha Badmann of Switzerland, together with rising stars such as Britain's Emma-Kate Lidbury and Paul Matthews of Australia.

They will compete for a slice of the US\$75,000 purse, with men and women winners each taking home US\$12,000; runners-up US\$8,000 and third-place US\$5,500.

The pro line-up will also be bidding to beat the winning times of the 2010 inaugural race set by Tim O'Donnell of the USA (3:59:42) and Switzerland's Caroline Steffen (4:20:13), both absent from this year's event.

LPT champions Massimo Cigana of Italy and the Czech Republic's Radka Vodickova are among triathletes competing both LPT and the Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship. bookending the Tri-Fest, aimed at enhancing the growing attraction of Laguna Phuket as a world-class triathlon destination.

In all, more than 2,000 triathletes have been on the island for both events, reaffirming Phuket’s stature as a venue for world-class sporting events and an international tourism magnet.

Michael Ayling, managing director of Laguna Resorts & Hotels, said: “Triathlon is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world, attracting participants and followers with both the dedication and the means to travel internationally for competitions and spread positive impressions of host locations such as Phuket.”

The introduction of Ironman 70.3 by the World Triathlon Corporation in 2006 acknowledged the popularity of half Ironman triathlon distance racing around the world.

Ironman 70.3 exceeds the Laguna Phuket Triathlon distances of 1.8km swim, 55km bike ride and 12km run by 44km, consisting of a 1.9km swim; 90km bike ride and a 20.1km run to make a total of 112km – the equivalent of 70.3 miles, seen as more attainable and attractive than the “full” Ironman of double that distance.

Ironman 70.3 Asia-Pacific Championship Pro Purse (Male and Female)

Winner	US\$12,000
Runner-up	US\$8,000
Third	US\$5,500
Fourth	US\$4,000
Fifth	US\$3,500
Sixth	US\$2,000
Seventh	US\$1,500
Eighth	US\$1,000

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Note to the Editor

Laguna Phuket is Asia’s finest destination resort – a collection of deluxe hotels and villas including Banyan Tree Phuket, Angsana Laguna Phuket, Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket, Laguna Beach Resort, Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort and Villas, Best Western Allamanda Laguna Phuket, and Laguna Holiday Club Resort - all sharing 1,000 acres of tropical parkland and three kilometers of beach frontage with the Laguna Phuket Golf Club, Canal Shopping Village, Banyan Tree Spa, four Angsana Spas, Laguna Wedding Chapel, Quest Laguna Phuket Adventure an on-site team building facility, and Latitude a unique stand-alone function venue.

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