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26th March 2011

RYAN AND WEBBY SMASH STAR-STUDED FIELDS AT MOUNT OCEAN SWIM

Phillip Ryan smashed the field to win the latest round of the State Ocean Swim Series at Mount Maunganui today, in the process picking up his first ever victory in the series while Charlotte Webby was even more emphatic in the women's race as she extended her overall lead in the nationwide open water swim series.

The shocking weather affecting the entire North Island and parts of the South impacted on the event with organisers making the only sensible decision to move all races from the main Mount Maunganui Beach to the more sheltered and calm Pilot Bay. Event Director Scott Rice consulted Surf Life Saving New Zealand and the Port of Tauranga Harbourmaster in making the call to move from the heavy swells and surf hitting the East Coast.

The calm water was meant to be a blessing for State Series leader Bryn Murphy, taking away some of the open water edge that the likes of specialist Phillip Ryan might otherwise have enjoyed. Not that you would have noticed as 20 year old Ryan took it to the field and put 20 metres on the chasers in the first lap, leading by 10 seconds at the 1.7km mark with race favourite Murphy in third with young up and comer Jonathan Pullon in second.

Ryan had put the hammer down though and was feeling good.

"I just wanted to go out hard and hold on to it the whole way. I knew I had a good lead at the end of the first lap, I was able to look behind to check on the chasers and knew I had established a lead so just kept going for it. That is my

first win in the series overall too and feels great, I honestly felt so good out there today, I could have kept going beyond the finish, I had plenty left in the tank.”

Conditions didn't affect Ryan at all, indeed they were better in the water than on land.

“It was perfect, not great for the spectators with the rain but in the water was great, beautiful. The water was flat and the tide didn't affect me at all, I didn't notice it at any time.”

Murphy finished strongly to come home in second ahead of Jonathan Pullon and consolidate his lead in the series before a series defining final race at the King of the Bays on April 16 when his match up with Kane Radford will be amongst the highlights.

Meanwhile Charlotte Webby as expected made no race of it in the women's event, sitting in fifth overall at the 1.7km mark and well clear of second placed woman in former Surf Life Saving champion Johanna O'Conner who snuck ahead of Brenada Russell by just one second on the line.

Webby was delighted with her swim.

“I'm really happy with the swim, it really didn't feel too hard and as I wanted to I got on the feet of a good group of guys and got some great momentum in that first lap. It was pretty physical though, I was having a good scrap there for a while with Ben Campbell-Macdonald but I managed to get some clear water and stay on a good pace.

“Conditions were just perfect, flat water and easy navigation with easy line of sight on the buoys the whole way through the course. This sets me up nicely for King of the Bays now with me and Cara (Baker) having two wins a piece so it will be all on in that final race.”

Television and radio personality Stephen McIvor took part in the 1,000m event earlier in the day, and like many in the field was looking to challenge himself well and truly beyond his comfort zone.

“It was tougher than I expected and I am extremely disappointed with my time of just over 30 minutes as I have gone quicker than that in training. But I loved it and will certainly take part in the series again, it has been a great experience.”

The final race in the State Ocean Swim Series is the King of the Bays on April 16th – visit www.oceanswim.co.nz for more information.

**State Ocean Swim Series
Mount Maunganui (Pilot Bay)
'I'm Going Long' 2.6km swim**

Men

1 Phillip Ryan	Auckland	28:49
2 Bryn Murphy	Dunedin	29:10
3 Jonathan Pullon	Waikato	29:48
4 Ben Campbell-Macdonald	Wellington	30:39
5 Evan Wilson	Waikato	30:43

Women

1 Charlotte Webby	N Plymouth	30:47
2 Johanna O'Connor	Auckland	32:35
3 Brenda Russell	Auckland	32:36
4 Nicole Rosewarne	Auckland	34:02
5 Natalie Peat	BOP	34:27