

IMPORTANT – CHANGE OF SWIM VENUE FOR OWLER TRIATHLON – PLEASE READ

As you will know, we have been struggling with the water quality at Conningbrook Lake behind the Julie Rose Stadium for the entire summer so far. As a result, we have been working hard behind the scenes to try and secure an alternative lake for the event to ensure it will be a triathlon, not a duathlon.

The water at Conningbrook is still not clear of Blue Green Algae, so with the kind help of Brett Group, our main sponsor, we have finally secured an alternative lake this week and made the decision to move the swim to Jury's Gap, Lydd, Kent, TN29 9JW. This is around a 20 minute drive from Ashford.

This ensures you have a triathlon championships – but it does also bring some changes to the event:

1. Camping will now be at Lydd from the Friday night, not at Ashford Rugby Club as originally planned. You will be able to shower at the Julie Rose Stadium on Saturday when registering if you wish and Sunday after the event.
2. There will be a split transition – start at Lydd with T1 and then T2 at the Julie Rose Stadium. The run remains the same.
3. You will now need to use transition bags for the event – we will provide three bags to each athlete in both the half and the standard triathlon, and two to the aquabike athletes. **PLEASE READ THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT TIME YOUR RUN BAG NEEDS TO BE PLACED IN THE VAN AT THE SWIM START. IF YOU MISS THIS TIME, YOUR RUN BAG WILL NOT BE READY FOR YOU TO PICK UP IN T2. WE TAKE NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR BAGS MISSED BY ATHLETES NOT READING INSTRUCTIONS OR FAILING TO MEET THE TIMING CUT OFFS FOR THIS.**
4. T2 – this will be set out before Saturday when we have registration at the stadium, so you will have an opportunity to look at T2 then. The racks will be numbered so you will be able to see where you are going to rack your bike for T2. On the Sunday morning, the run bags will be placed at your racking spot in T2 before you arrive at the venue, and will be waiting when you arrive. You will rack your own bike.
5. Registration will open Saturday 1200-1600 at the Julie Rose Stadium. **PLEASE REGISTER HERE WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO EASE CONGESTION ON THE EVENT MORNING.** Registration will be open at Lydd on the morning of the event, but we will not be taking entries on the day. **IF YOU REGISTER AT LYDD ON THE MORNING OF THE EVENT ONLY, YOU WILL NOT GET TO SEE T2 IN ADVANCE.**
6. There will be free parking both at Lydd for the swim and also at the stadium, with overflow parking at Premier Foods and Givaudan. **IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE ENSURE YOUR SUPPORTER/S CAN DRIVE YOUR VEHICLE BACK TO THE STADIUM WHERE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO PARK.** This will prevent you needing to get back to Lydd to pick your car up after the event has finished.
7. There will be a shuttle bus running from 1330 onwards from the JRS to the Lydd lake, but **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TRANSPORT YOUR BIKE ON THIS SHUTTLE.** You will instead need to bring your car back to the stadium to pick up your kit, including your bike. All wetsuits and streetwear will be transported back to the stadium by event staff, so all of your kit will be in one place when you have finished. **IT IS THEREFORE IMPERATIVE YOU HAVE ALL OF YOUR KIT IN THE RELEVANT NUMBERED BAG TO ENSURE THE CORRECT ITEMS ARE RETURNED TO YOU.** This is why it is better for you if you can get someone to return your vehicle to the stadium for you where possible, as it will enable you to have a faster getaway after the event.

8. **Kennington Road CLOSED** – As if we needed another challenge, the Willesborough Road outside the stadium is closed to traffic at one end. So all athletes, supporters etc will need to access the JRS by coming off the M20 at J9 **NOT J10** and following the diversion signs to the JRS. Traffic from the Hastings direction should join the M20 at J10 and then come off at J9 and follow the diversion signs.
9. Goody bags and event tees – Due to the split transition, we have decided that this year we will be giving event tees and goody bags to competitors at the end of the event rather than registration. So please do not be disappointed if you do not receive one as normal at registration, you will have it, just later in the process.
10. There will be a snack wagon at Lydd on the morning of the event for refreshments.

Lydd Lake

This has been swum by the event organiser and chief official today, and is beautifully clear, extremely pleasant and has NO DISCERNIBLE WEED. For competitors who have swum in Conningbrook Lake before, we hope this will be a welcome change. When upright in the water this morning, it was possible to see your feet. BUT THERE MUST BE NO SWIMMING PRIOR TO THE EVENT. ANY ATHLETE BREACHING THIS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO COMPETE, and runs the risk of preventing the event going ahead at all. This is a safety issue, and must NOT be ignored.

Bike route change

The bike route is now point-to-point and does NOT now involve any laps. For those who have practised on the bike course, the elevation of the new route is only 30m different to the initial route, and is the same distance. So your training will still have been perfect for it. This is intentional, and not without difficulty on our part.

We appreciate changes at a late stage are unsettling, but please rest assured we have done everything we can to ensure you have the best event possible. In fact, the bike route is actually more picturesque than the original, and goes onto the A28 one time for the half rather than multiple times, and the Standard does not go onto the A28 at all. It also removes the problematic road closure for the Championship event just outside the stadium, which is another plus.

Only the Standard bike route goes through this road closure, and we have established an access route with Kent Highways for this purpose.

PLEASE LOOK AT THE MAPS CAREFULLY TO FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE HALF AND STANDARD ROUTES AS THEY NOW STAND.

A message from Dick Donovan, Chief Official of the TE Middle Distance Championship – OWLER TRIATHLON, 23RD JULY 2017

As the BTF's nominated Chief Official for this event, I have been liaising closely with the organisers, TriSpirit Events, over gathering concerns relating to issues of water quality – specifically blue green algae – in Conningbrook Lake in Ashford, where the swim element of the triathlon was due to be held.

Given that blue green algae can cause a range of problems to humans if swallowed, it is recommended that no swimming takes place in water where levels exceed a certain level. Blue green algae has been present in the lake for a few weeks at high levels, and TriSpirit have been monitoring levels closely with weekly tests, but sadly it seems that levels are not reducing sufficiently to ensure a safe swim on the 23rd July.

In consultation with me, given the limited time left , we have concluded that Conningbrook Lake cannot be used for this event as we cannot ensure that blue green algae levels will drop to a safe level.

As the Triathlon England Middle Distance Championship event for 2017, I want to ensure that athletes have a triathlon that warrants Championship status, and also ensure that the swim element is not eliminated making the event into a duathlon. I feel sure that all triathletes will agree with me on this – you signed up for a triathlon and you want a 1900m swim!

To this end, TriSpirit Events have secured the use of an alternative open water venue at Jury's Gap (between Camber and Lydd) which has no issues with water quality and offers a great venue for the swim element, T1, and overnight camping for those taking up this offer. I have checked the venue to ensure it complies with the standards required of an open water venue and can honestly say, it's great!!! There are also plenty of spectator areas and visitor access.

However, having the swim at the new venue means a split transition plus a changed cycle route towards the Julie Rose Stadium for T2 where the original run course will still take place with the finish still inside the stadium as planned. The logistics of parking, baggage transfer, and return to Jury's Gap will be communicated to you separately, but please be assured that the organisers have this well covered and in hand.

I am sure there will be some disappointment that the Julie Rose Stadium cannot offer the whole venue, but you will still get a great race that is fair to all, but most importantly is safe.

Trispirit Events have done a fantastic job – at short notice - in both securing the new swim venue and arranging a new bike course that closely matches the original one in distance and overall elevation.

I and the Technical Officials working with me, look forward to seeing you at Jury's Gap on 23rd July for the start of a great race.

Dick Donovan

Entries

Due to the late changes, we have decided to extend the time people have to enter until Thursday 20th July at 1800. Please let people know if they intend to enter as we will not be taking entries after this point, due to the additional logistical work associated with a Championship event.

And finally...

Please make sure you read the instructions very carefully as timings have changed in some cases and we do not want you to miss out because of a lack of information. Not to mention it has taken us a long time to rewrite them, so it would be kinda nice if you read them.

Any questions, please let us know. But we look forward to welcoming you to the new and – we feel - improved Owler Triathlon for 2017.

Liz and Ali,

Tri Spirit Events

