FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 2019

Media Release

YWCA Women’s Triathlon Competes to be Nation’s “Most Welcoming Race”

WHAT: YWCA Minneapolis Women’s Triathlon has sold out for two consecutive years. One major reason for that: YWCA has a goal to host the most welcoming and supportive triathlon for female and non-binary racers of every size, ability, age and background.

New this year, and one huge leap toward that goal is the “Paratriathlon Friendly” designation by the USA Triathlon Paratriathlon Committee. Along with only a handful of races across the country, YWCA Women’s Tri has been officially approved as a race welcoming to adaptive athletes.

This year, YWCA is also partnering with Fund Her Tri, an organization that provides sponsorships to first-time female triathletes to address the financial barrier many women face.

Each year, the event attracts participants ranging in age from 11 - 80. One in three participants is completely new to triathlons. They are beginners, seasoned triathletes and everyone in-between. “It’s about representation,” says Race Director Rachael Weiker. “When they see other women in their community doing it, the more likely they are to think: I can do that, too.”

Many call it the “most welcoming race,” because of its warm, encouraging atmosphere and the many supportive features that make YWCA Women’s Triathlon unique – a free training plan, open water swim clinics and training classes that help triathletes prepare to race. Through YWCA Women’s Triathlon, women achieve athletic goals they might not thought possible.

On August 11, triathletes will swim 500 yards in Lake Nokomis, bike 15.5 scenic miles along the Mississippi River on the West River Parkway and run 5 kilometers on the paved trail circling Lake Nokomis to complete the race. SuperSprint racers compete on a shorter course. The race draws an additional 4,500 spectators to cheer on the athletes.

WHERE: Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis, MN 55417
WHEN: Sunday, August 11, 2019, 5:45 am – 12:00 pm

(See back for photo opportunities)
Photo Opportunities:

5:45 - 7:45 am ................. Transition area opens
8:00 am ......................... Welcoming remarks and national anthem
8:10 am ......................... First wave of racers starts and waves continue through 9:30 am
9:10 am ......................... First athlete crosses the finish line
11:45 am - 12:00 pm ...... Last athlete crosses the finish line
12:00 - 12:30 pm ............ Award ceremony

Interview Opportunities:

Heather Hannig
Vice President, Health and Wellness

Heather is responsible for leading the operation of YWCA health and fitness centers and programs, can speak to the triathlon’s history, its place as a leader among races and its mission to empower women and girls.

Rachael Weiker
Women’s Triathlon Race Director

Rachael is a seasoned triathlete and has raced around the world in endurance events. She received both her MBA and Masters in Public Policy from Brandeis University, and can speak to the growth of YWCA Women’s Triathlon and what makes the race unique.

About YWCA Minneapolis

YWCA Minneapolis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating racism and empowering women and girls. For more than 125 years, we have worked to create opportunities to overcome social injustice, particularly in matters of gender and race. Last year, YWCA Minneapolis served more than 30,000 people in our community through Racial Justice and Public Policy, Early Childhood Education, Girls and Youth, and Health and Wellness programs. To learn more, visit ywcampls.org.
Fun Facts

1,700+ registrants each year

500+ volunteers each year

2,500+ participants in classes/clinics (since 2008)

94% of waste is composted or recycled

350+ participants are over the age of 50

23 states are represented by participants

1 in 3 participants is new to triathlons

AGE 11 youngest racer

oldest racer AGE 81

Race of the Year
in 2012 and 2017, Top 5 every year since 2008

MinnesotaTriNews.com
Fun Facts

What Makes YWCA Women’s Triathlon Unique?

» We are the only all-women triathlon in Minnesota.

» We offer unparalleled training support through a free training plan, free clinics and an abundance of training classes, including mini-triathlons and open water swim clinics.

» We encourage women to race with buddies, guaranteeing a transition spot and wave assignment with a buddy or group of buddies, if they choose.

» While a participant is racing, we offer unrivaled aquatic support, providing novice swim caps and noodle swimmers.

» We have a popular Friends and Family Finish Zone that allows kids and family members to cross the finish line with their moms, sisters, daughters, aunts and grandmas.

» We give special awards to sister-sister teams, mother-daughter teams, life partner teams and those in first-timer categories.
Racing to Get Her Life Back

The 2018 YWCA Women’s Triathlon was the first for athlete Molly Lethert. Molly says her sister watched the event for years and always thought it would be a great race for her. In 2017, Molly surgically amputated her left foot. It was a decision that came after 40 years of pain – years before, her foot was injured in a snowmobile accident, essentially severing it and the dozens of surgeries she had didn’t help. “I finally realized that I was missing out on life,” says Molly.
Afterward, Molly decided to grab ahold of her life again – part of that was signing up for YWCA Women’s Triathlon. “I felt comfortable in such a diverse group of women — young and old, fast and slow. I was amazed at all of the high-fives and kind words I received from women I didn’t even know while I was in transition and out on the course,” says Molly. Her advice to others? “Start slowly, set small goals and surround yourself with supportive people.”

Molly was integral in helping YWCA Women’s Triathlon get its “Paratriathlon Friendly” designation.
About YWCA Women’s Triathlon

YWCA Minneapolis Women’s Triathlon is an annual race held in August that attracts more than 1,400 triathletes. YWCA Women’s Triathlon will be in its 12th year of celebrating the strength in all women. As the largest all-women triathlon in the contiguous United States, the race brings together participants ages 11 - 80+ with varying levels of experience, diverse backgrounds and powerful stories. Triathletes enjoy competing in a supportive, inspiring environment that draws over 4,500 spectators and more than 500 volunteers each year. All proceeds from the event support YWCA Minneapolis programs.

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