



TRANS Taupo – Records tumble

Last Saturday saw Lake Taupo play host to what has quickly become the biggest open water paddle/row event in the country, with large flotilla of a multitude of different craft tackling the marathon 44km paddle and row challenge across Australasia's biggest lake.

With forecast wind making a late shift towards the west and lessening in strength, Trans Taupo race organiser Neil Gellatly made a decisive call mid-Friday afternoon to run the 2nd annual paddle and row event the original direction South to North across the lake. This proved a pivotal decision which consequently had paddlers enjoying a nice light 5-10 knot southwesterly breeze and the assistance of little runners for a good portion of their journey up the lake under a perfect overcast sky.

In what competitors described afterwards as near ideal conditions, it was obvious that the 2008 course and category records were going to be at threat. But with craft set off in class waves, a new wake washing ruling and an ever so slightly new longer course, no one predicted the times that eventuated and the sheer enormity of the record spree.

With a hot pace set by all vying for line and category honors, no fewer than 9 craft and paddler/rowers went under the overall race record set by Auckland's Simon McLarin in the inaugural event. Amongst these and taking line honors for a second year running was McLarin, smashing his previous time by 16 min 45 sec to set a new course record of 3hrs 29 min 4 sec., again narrowly heading off a valiant challenge from Auckland's Tim Grammer just 1 min and 6 seconds in arrears, with top Australian paddler Matt Blundell claiming third. This winning effort was not only matched but bettered by the winning woman, Auckland's and world no# 1 ranked surf ski paddler - Katie Pocock, who slashed 17 min 59 sec off her winning effort last year to be the first woman to break into the sub 4hr club with an amazing time of 3hrs 42min 24 sec – remarkably also faster than the old overall race course record.

The battle to be the first multi seat craft home was perhaps the tightest of all with just 25 seconds separating the first 3 home. The double sea kayak pairing of Dave Rudge and Jerome Sheppard shaved an impressive 17 min & 35 sec of the category record they previously owned to also break the 4 hour barrier for the first time and claim the multi seat honors by a slim 12 seconds, in a time of 3 hrs 43min 2 sec from the Eastern Bay Scullers ocean rowing quartet. Whilst the Eastern Bay Scullers had an almighty battle the entire way across the lake with the 2008 3rd place getters overall - Wanganui River Institute (boosted this year with 93' 94' World Rowing Champ – Brenda Lawson) which ended with only a mere 13 sec separating the two ocean rowing craft at the finish.

So quick were the times that in total no fewer than 12 craft and crew broke the 4 hr barrier to join the 3 who were inducted into the Sub 4hr Club in 2008. In addition to those mentioned above, 4th to 6th

placed male surf ski paddlers Dave Hicks, Gerrard Callebaut and Damian Munro, all join the exclusive club, along with under 50 mixed double sea kayak pairing Pete O'Sullivan and Anne Cairns who cut 17min 25 sec off the old category record, clocking 3hrs 50min 58 sec, plus 2nd placed double sea kayak men under 50 pair of Mark Struthers and Isak Meyer who scrapped in under 4hrs by just 37 seconds.

All up 8 category records fell and those not previously mentioned include Melanie Grant who knocked a massive 1 hr 5min 8 sec off the previous single women's sea kayak record; Bryce Irving who took 15 min 37 sec off the previous single men's waka ama record, falling 3 min and 9 seconds shy of breaking the 4hr barrier; and Teresa Mumby and Jane Ganley who took a huge 45min 49 sec of the previous double sea kayak women's record.

With overall individual male & female and first multi-seat craft getting good prize money; cash bonuses being handed out to all category record breakers; and all category winners being recognised; competitor's efforts were generously rewarded. And for those who took up the challenge to complete rather than to compete the crossing, everyone received an impressive registration goodie bag, and shared in what was a magnificent bounty of spot prizes at the end of the day.

From smiles on faces and positive talk amongst competitors, supporters, sponsors and volunteers around the finish line and at prize giving, the vibes coming from the event indicated everyone had a great experience; with many quick to say they'd certainly be coming back to paddle or row next year. If you'd like to join them, mark down TRANS TAUPO in your calendar on the 20th of March 2010.

A full set of finalised race results can be found on the website www.transtaupo.co.nz along with links to race photo's and soon to be released video footage.

The race organiser would like to thank the following groups of people for helping make the event a success – Tu Wharetoa Maori Trust Board; Taupo District Council; Destination Lake Taupo; Taupo Harbour Master; Turangi and Taupo Volunteer Coast Guard members; Tokaanu Lodge Motel proprietor's; Tokaanu Tu Wharewaka Water Sports Complex Trustees; D.o.C; Taumarunui Lions Club; Taupo Yacht Club administers; Friends and Family.

And the organiser is extremely grateful for the support of the following sponsors – Canoe & Kayak; Prorack; Mighty River Power; Ruahine Kayaks; Barracuda Kayaks; Q-Kayaks; Hammer Nutrition; NZ Kayak Magazine; Concept 2; SharkSkin; Liquor King; Rasdex; Em's Power Cookies; JKK Kayaks; Adventure Multisport Options; Day Two; Great Stuff; Top Gear; Fortebody Reconditioning; Taupo Tandem Skydiving; and event partners – Destination Lake Taupo; Sportzhub.com; Photochick.co.nz; North Shore City Beach Series; King of the Harbour; Bhutty Moore-morial Race; SuperDune; Burger Fuel; Hell's Pizza; & Icebreaker.