



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**March 4, 2015**

# **Aussies ready for triathlon's new frontier in Abu Dhabi**

Olympians Emma Moffatt and Brendan Sexton will spearhead a six-strong Australian team into triathlon's "land of the unknown" when the ITU World Triathlon Series (WTS) kicks off in a new frontier in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (Saturday night, Australian time).

The opening round in Abu Dhabi will show case the UAE capital for the first time on the prestigious WTS circuit, a city that joins Auckland, the Gold Coast, Cape Town, Yokohama, London, Hamburg, Stockholm, Edmonton and Chicago on a spectacular world tour for the cream of the world's WTS triathlete

The exclusive Abu Dhabi Sailing & Yacht Club will host the Sprint race format with the race unfolding along the breakwater opposite the Abu Dhabi Corniche – that forms a sweeping curve on the western side of the main Abu Dhabi Island.

It will feature a 750m swim off the Volvo Ocean Race yacht pontoons, while the looped 20km bike and 5km run courses, will follow and feature a turnaround point along the Corniche Road starting and finishing at the Sailing & Yacht Club.

It is the start of a campaign Moffatt hopes sets her on track for a third Olympics in Rio next year, while Sexton is hoping to claw his way back to the kind of form that saw him make the Olympic team for London in 2012.

They will be joined by the men's Commonwealth Games trio from Glasgow, Dan Wilson, Ryan Bailie and Aaron Royle in a red-hot men's field that features nine of the world's top 10 – including the top three – Spanish pair Javier Gomez and Mario Mola and Great Britain's Jonathan Brownlee.

The only one missing from the top 10 is Olympic champion Alistair Brownlee who will kick-start his 2015 campaign in Auckland for race two.

Moffatt will only have 2013 Under 213 ITU World Champion Charlotte McShane to keep her company in the women's field that also features 14 of the top 20 and the world's top three – USA pair Gwen Jorgensen and Sarah True (nee Groff) and New Zealander Andrea Hewitt.

Triathlon Australia's National Performance Director Bernard Savage knows there will be no room for complacency.

"It may be the first race of the season but there is no way you can ease your way into racing, that's for sure," said Savage.

"It's going to be an exciting start to the WTS and our guys are going to have to be on their game from the outset.

"Our men's team looks good with a lot of experience and when you look through both sets of fields they are world class – you are up against the best of the best first up.

"And it will be good to see Emma Moffatt back racing and joined by Charlotte McShane."

Head coach of the Australian-based Wollongong Wizards group, Jamie Turner, who has three athletes on the team – Bailie, Royle and McShane as well as ITU World champion, Jorgensen, knows the athletes will have to be prepared for anything in triathlon's new frontier.

"Abu Dhabi is a city of the unknown, when it comes to triathlon," said Turner.

"You have to be ready for the heat, the wind, different equipment and just not knowing what to expect and that's why we are going in early to acclimatise and to get over the jet lag and get four sleeps before you race.

"If it was Hamburg then you know 'every nook and cranny' like the back of your hand, we've been there so many times.

"We have done as much training in the heat of the day as we can to prepare for the heat and then there's the wind, which determines the wheels you use."

After spending December and January at altitude at Falls Creek, Turner has had McShane training twice a week in the heat adaptation chamber at NSWIS' Sydney headquarters to get her acclimatised to the kind of weather she can expect.

Bailie and Royle, ninth and 10<sup>th</sup> respectively on the 2014 rankings have shown Turner they are ready for the 2015 WTS circuit, using Abu Dhabi as a launching pad for the Standard (Olympic) distance opener in Auckland on March 28,29 and then the Gold Coast on April 10 and 11.

While Sexton, who had no luck with a puncture in his hit out in Devonport, which forced him out of the race two weeks ago, knows he will have to control the first section of his run.

Bailie, who is swimming as well as ever, has the runs on the board when it comes to sprint distance and Royle is also a class act who will be looking towards Auckland as a key event for him.

Wilson enjoyed an injury free 2014 and according to his coach Stephen Moss is “jumping out of his skin”

## **WTS RACE ONE – ABU DHABI**

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## **PROFILES OF AUSTRALIAN ATHLETES WOMEN**

### **EMMA MOFFATT**

**Age: 29**

**QLD**

A two-time Olympian in 2008 and 2012 and two time ITU World Champion in 2009 and 2010 is back on track for 2015 and chasing a third Olympic Team in Rio in 2016. Moffatt missed last year’s ITU WTS Grand Final following a disappointing Commonwealth Games after being diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome which had disrupted her year. A member of Australia’s bronze medal winning Commonwealth Games Mixed Teams relay team with Emma Jackson, Ryan Bailie and Aaron Royle, the 2008 Olympic bronze medallist from Beijing is determined to lead the Australian charge towards this year’s Grand Final in Chicago, stopping off for the all-important Rio qualifying event in August. Moffatt is one of Australia’s most decorated triathletes, who leaves no stone unturned under coaches Shaun Stephens and master swim coach Denis Cotterell.

### **CHARLOTTE MCSHANE**

**Age: 24**

**NSW**

After a stirring performance to win the ITU Under 23 World Championship in London in 2013, McShane has continued to develop into one of Australia’s young guns on the WTS circuit, continuing to mix it with the big guns in seven of the eight races in 2014, racing to her best result in Chicago where she finished 10<sup>th</sup>. Has a good track record over the sprint distance having won the 2013 Oceania Sprint Distance title. A

member of Jamie Turner's Wollongong Wizards who spent two stints at altitude training in December and January at Falls Creek to prepare for 2015. Turner and senior NSWIS physiologist Katie Slattery devised a program for McShane to also spend two days a week in the heat adaptation chamber in Sydney to best prepare her. Will be looking to this race to prepare her for Auckland.

## **MEN**

### **Ryan BAILIE**

**Age: 24**

**NSW**

The South African born Bailie who made Perth his family home before linking up with Jamie Turner and the Wizards in Wollongong. Is currently Australia's number one ranked male triathlete after the 2014 season, placed him ninth, after his most consistent year to date. Started out with his best WTS finish (5<sup>th</sup> in Auckland) and showed his class with a 7<sup>th</sup> in London before unleashing the race of his life to spearhead the Australian team to the teams relay bronze in Glasgow at the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Bailie ensured Australia was on the podium with a calculated final run leg. A methodical, uncompromising athlete, who does not have a weakness, and has the runs on the board to maintain his place inside the top ten in the world and cement his place on his first Olympic team in 2016. Along with training partner Royle, represents the new breed of male triathletes.

### **Aaron ROYLE**

**Age: 25**

**NSW**

The Newcastle-born Royle has spent the last three years mixing it with triathlon's royalty and has rubbed shoulders with the likes of the Brownlees, Gomez and the world's top 10. The 2012 ITU under 23 World Champion made the step up to Elite on the WTS in 2013 and 2014, with his London ITU GF 7<sup>th</sup> gaining automatic selection on the Australian Commonwealth Games Team for Glasgow, his first major multi-sport team. He finished eighth. Royle has settled into the rigors of the Jamie Turner-coached Wollongong Wizards who spend their summers in the Illawarra and their winters in the northern Spanish city of Vitoria-Gasteiz. Finished 2014 ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the world in one of the most competitive seasons of the WTS and put the icing on 2014 cake when he defended at both Penrith and Noosa with impressive performances. On form Royle should become an Olympian in 2016.

### **Dan WILSON**

**Age: 29**

**QLD**

Dan The Man just keeps on keeping on, emerging in 2014 to make the Australian Commonwealth Games team after an up and down two years, littered with injury and operations. The man who won his first World Cup in 2010 gets the vote for believing in his ability and his dream. Started last year with an encouraging close-up 4<sup>th</sup> in the opening WTS Auckland round and finished it off as the best placed Australian male in the WTS Grand Final in Edmonton when he finished 13<sup>th</sup> after a disappointing Glasgow. Finished the year in 16<sup>th</sup> place on the WTS rankings –the third Australian behind Bailie and Royle in the world’s top 20. Went on to finish second to Royle at Noosa in another great show of strength. No matter what the result in 2015 and 2016, Dan Wilson will “keep the boys honest.”

### **Brendan SEXTON**

**Age: 29**

**NSW**

The 2012 Olympian has gradually worked his way back into contention, finding his mojo as he pushes his opposition to the limit in training. Finished fourth in the ITU WTS in Sydney, in 2011, winning the Monterrey World Cup in Mexico and coming runner up in both the Mooloolaba World Cup and Oceania Cup in New Zealand, winning selection to make his Olympic debut in London, where he finished 35<sup>th</sup>. Has struggled through injury and illness to get back to that kind of form ever since and has hovered between 29<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> on the WTS rankings in recent years. Finished 41<sup>st</sup> in the ITU Grand Final in Edmonton. But has become an intricate part of the Jamie Turner world class Wizards group in Wollongong and only has to put it all together to become a major player in the run towards Rio. Has a killer 10km run leg which will always hold him in good stead at the money end of races.

### **Abu Dhabi (UAE) World Triathlon Series (March 6,7)**

**Sprint Distance (750m; 20km; 5km)**

#### **MEN**

Dan Wilson (QLD)

Aaron Royle (NSW)

Ryan Bailie (WA)

Brendan Sexton (NSW)

#### **WOMEN**

Emma Moffatt (QLD)

Charlotte McShane (NSW)

### **Mooloolaba (AUS) World Cup (March 14,15)**

**Sprint Distance (750m; 20km; 5km)**

#### **MEN**

Jake Birtwhistle (TAS)  
Cameron Good (NSW)  
Declan Wilson (ACT)  
Kenji Nener (WA)  
Courtney Atkinson (QLD)  
Matt Baker (NSW)  
Peter Kerr (VIC)  
Jesse Featonby (ACT)

**WOMEN**

Ashleigh Gentle (QLD)  
Gillian Backhouse (QLD)  
Natalie Van Coervorden (NSW)  
Jaz Hedgeland (WA)  
Erin Densham (NSW)  
Grace Musgrove (NSW)  
Felicity Sheedy-Ryan (WA)  
Ellie Salthouse (QLD)

**New Plymouth (NZL) World Cup (March 21, 22)**  
**Sprint Distance (750m; 20km; 5km)**

**MEN**

Kenji Nener (WA)  
Luke Willian (QLD)  
Courtney Atkinson (QLD)  
Drew Box (QLD)  
Jesse Featonby (ACT)

**WOMEN**

Natalie Van Coervorden (NSW)  
Grace Musgrove (NSW)  
Erin Densham (NSW)  
Felicity Sheedy-Ryan (WA)  
Ellie Salthouse (QLD)

**Auckland (NZL) World Triathlon Series (March 28, 29)**  
**Standard Distance (1.5km; 40km; 10km)**

**MEN**

Aaron Royle (NSW)  
Ryan Bailie (WA)  
Dan Wilson (QLD)  
Jake Birtwhistle (TAS)  
Brendan Sexton (NSW)  
Cameron Good (NSW)

**WOMEN**

Emma Moffatt (QLD)

Ashleigh Gentle (QLD)  
Emma Jackson (QLD)  
Gillian Backhouse (QLD)  
Erin Densham (NSW)  
Charlotte McShane (NSW)

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