



MEDIA RELEASE

**6 Events | \$32,000 In Cash Prizes
Australasia's Best Open Water Swimmers**

**World Championship swimmers to tackle King of the Bays
State King of the Bays, Takapuna, April 18th 2015**

<http://www.oceanswim.co.nz>

A major showdown looms at the State King of the Bays this weekend, with six swimmers who have qualified for this year's World Championships set to dive into the surf at Takapuna.

As is befitting of the occasion, with double points and a \$20,000 prize pool up for grabs, one of the strongest fields ever assembled in the series will be on the start line, as the National Ocean Swim Series reaches a thrilling conclusion.

Nathan Capp leads the charge in the men's field. Capp comes into the State King of the Bays in blistering form, having beaten Dean Kent's long standing national record in the 400 metres individual medley on Wednesday night. The national 800 and 1500 metres freestyle champion has also showed his class in the State Ocean Swim Series this season, winning both events he has swum so far, in Wellington and Mt Maunganui.

The 22-year-old Aucklander now has his sights set firmly on the State Ocean Swim Series title and the \$5,000 first prize.

"I'm really looking forward to getting into the King of the Bays and testing myself against a very tough field", said Capp.

"My confidence is obviously pretty good after the past few weeks but you never know what's going to happen on the day so you just have to focus on swimming your best and hoping that is good enough to win."

Certainly, Capp has a fair few hurdles to overcome, in the shape of other in-form swimmers.

Yasunari Hirai is a major danger. Japan's top ranked open water swimmer won the opening two events of the State Ocean Swim Series and returns from his training base across the Tasman with his eye firmly on claiming the overall series honours.

Likewise, New Zealand open water champion Kane Radford is determined to stamp a Kiwi name on the winner's trophy while current series leader Phillip Ryan has finished on the podium in all four events he's swum this season.

The other man to watch out for could be China's Jun Dai. The Coast Swim Club member has his heart set on one day representing New Zealand, once he has satisfied the residency criteria, and showed he would be a valuable addition to the Kiwi team when he won this week's national 400 metres freestyle title ahead of New Zealand Olympic and Commonwealth Games representative Matt Stanley.

Meanwhile, the women's field also has a couple swimmers who have qualified for the World Champs with Lauren Boyle and Emma Robinson both competing.

Boyle is the undoubted superstar of New Zealand swimming and the 1500 metres short course world record holder showed her class with a comfortable victory in the 400 metres at this week's champs. That proved a great fillip for Robinson, who also set a qualifying time in the event as she tried to keep pace with Boyle.

However, the woman to beat in the State King of the Bays is Charlotte Webby. The 26-year-old is three for three in the series this season, winning the Bay of Islands Classic, the Harbour Crossing and the Sand to Surf.

However, after her last victory was secured in a mad dash up the beach ahead of Australian Samantha Watts, Webby knows she can take nothing for granted.

"I learnt my lesson in Mt Maunganui, which is not a bad thing," said Webby.

"It's a great reminder that there are a lot of talented swimmers in the field and it would be a mistake to take them lightly, particularly in the King of the Bays with double points on offer."

Around 1,600 swimmers are set to take part in the State King of the Bays on Saturday with the 2.8km "I'm Going Long" event featuring the elite swimmers scheduled to start at 11am.

2014/2015 Series Standings (After five rounds):

Men:

1. Phillip Ryan (Auckland) 299.01
2. Troy Balvert (Waikato) 295.82
3. Nathan Capp (Auckland) 200.00
4. Yasunari Hirai (Japan) 200.00
5. Kane Radford (Rotorua) 199.71
6. George O'Brien (Queensland) 199.14
7. Liam Albery (Wellington) 198.39
8. Michael Sheil (Queensland) 197.52
9. Ben Ruback (Wellington) 192.92
10. Dylan Dunlop-Barrett (Auckland) 190.39

Women:

1. Charlotte Webby (New Plymouth) 300.00
2. Abi Chapman (Auckland) 288.26
3. Gendi Roberts (Christchurch) 283.72
4. Aimee Moss (Auckland) 283.46
5. Sam Winward (Christchurch) 282.30

6. Laura Crockart (New South Wales) 196.40
7. Samantha Watts (New South Wales) 193.43
8. Steffanie Gillespie (Dunedin) 192.61
9. Alessandra Colombini (New South Wales) 189.02
10. Penelope Hayes (Waikato) 188.89

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