

# So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo to kick off on Feb. 24



The country's biggest international sporting event, So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo, is ready to officially kick off on February 24, 2019.

The second edition of the event is slated to increase engagement and attention for the country, some of the key benefits of hosting an event of such magnitude in Sri Lanka. The competition will see the participation of over 739 athletes from 58 countries, with another 899 friends and family accompanying the foreign participants to Colombo.

Furthermore, the So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo Expo is scheduled to take place from February 21-24, 2019, at the Lotus Ballroom of Shangri-La Colombo. The expo will showcase local and international sports, health and wellness products and services to the Ironman 70.3 participants as well as the public.

"Our goals in bringing the Ironman franchise to Sri Lanka last year were to establish the country as a viable destination for sports tourism and outdoor recreation, while encouraging Sri Lankans to get more involved in physically challenging activities. We were delighted with how the event unfolded last year and with the response we received from locals as well as the foreign participants, most of whom were travelling to our sunny shores for the first time. This gave us the motivation and determination to continue with the second edition of the event this year. The team is working tirelessly to make sure that all participants have a great triathlon, while enjoying true Sri Lankan hospitality," said Pro Am Serendib Director Yasas Hewage.

The top five participating countries in So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo are India with 94 triathletes, Great Britain with 55, Australia with 40, France with 34 and Japan with 24. Some of the other nations that will be represented at the triathlon are the USA, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Germany, Russia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

The average age of this year's athletes is 38, with the oldest participant being 76 years of age and the youngest a mere 18 years. A significant majority of the participants are male, with women constituting 24 percent of the total number of athletes. This year Ironman is encouraging women's participation in the sport and have allocated 25 slots from Sri Lanka exclusively for women that finish first to take part in the 2019 Ironman 70.3 World Championship, Nice, France.

"At Pro Am Serendib, we want to encourage Sri Lankans to get up, get out and physically challenge themselves more. Organising endurance sporting events such as So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo not only creates awareness for the country on a global level but it also gives our own people the opportunity to push themselves and feel the true rewards of physical achievement. Having realized that the number of female participants need to increase for future events, we are organising an 'in conversation' with Ironman great Julie Mossat the Kingsbury Hotel on February 21, to encourage and inspire more women to get involved in endurance sports," added Pro Am Serendib Director

Deshabandu Julian Bolling.

The race begins with a single-loop, 1.9km swim starting at the beach adjoining Galle Face Green, followed by a flat and fast 90km bike course and a 21.1 km run course that offers scenic country views and a fantastic finish in front of Galle Face Green. This year the bike course would be extended to Janadhipathi Mawatha, Sir Baron Jayathilaka Mawatha, York Street and BOC Mawatha. The run course will be extended up to Kollupitiya junction by making it more spectator friendly, the main aim of this year's the event is to focus on enhancing athlete and spectator experiences with a spectator friendly course design.

"An event of this magnitude requires the support and commitment of a large number of partners from both the public and private sectors in order to be a success. We are grateful to all organisations that have come forward to make So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo a reality," said Event Director and Pro Am Serendib Director Rajan Thanasayagam.

So Sri Lanka Ironman 70.3 Colombo is organised by Pro Am Serendib, the title sponsor of the event is Sri Lanka Tourism Promotions Bureau. Partner organisations include Shangri-La Colombo, MAS, SriLankan Airlines, Ceylinco, MTV/MBC Group, Hayleys Tours, Advantis, Asiri, Wijeya Group, SIS, Kantra LMRB, Emerging Media, Rotaract, Strategy, Honda, RedBall, Inspire X, Bernard's, Rainbow, Spinners, the Triathlon Club Colombo and 230i.