

BRANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR COLOMBO

Following the success of the first edition of IRONMAN 70.3 Colombo 2018 which took place in the country early this year and which had managed to attract over 880 participants and over 2300 friends and families from 63 Countries, and foreign exchange contributions close to USD 3 Million into Sri Lanka's economic benefit, the organizers have once again joined hands to hold the triathlon for the second consecutive year.

The first triathlon succeeded in drawing participants from around the world to take part in this challenge. The upcoming triathlon is to be held on February 24, 2019, conducted by Pro Am Serendib (Pvt) Ltd. in collaboration with private and public sector organisations such as Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and the Ministry of Tourism.

The IRONMAN 70.3, which is also dubbed as Half IRONMAN, is part of a series of long distance triathlon races held globally, which was initiated by the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC). The "70.3" in this segment denotes the total distance (113.0 km) covered in the race and consists of a 1.2-mile (1.9 km) swim, a 56-mile (90 km) bike ride, and a 13.1-mile (21.1 km) run. So, each of these distances, comprising of the swim, bike, and run segments is half the distance of that segment in an IRONMAN triathlon.



OVER 14,000 ROOM NIGHTS IN ONE WEEK!

The event made a significant impact to the travel and tourism sector by attracting 2,300 foreign travellers to Colombo filling rooms and increasing star class, budget hotels and homestay occupancy in the process. Families who travelled from abroad to witness the triathlon unfold were recorded to have stayed over 6 days and spent over USD 400 per

day and this in turn helped create significant opportunities for business segments such as Food & Beverage, retail and many others.

OVER 70% FIRST TIME VISITORS TO SRI LANKA

The inaugural triathlon attracted over 70% first time visitors from abroad and 92% of them were known to have stayed over in the country for at least three days, simply

proving how much Sri Lanka's reputation as an ideal tourist destination was elevated from an event of this calibre. From this statistic, at least 40% of the athletes decided to extend their visit or plan a future visit to Sri Lanka to explore the island a bit more.

According to 2016 statistics, Sports tourism makes up less than 1% of the current tourism and hospitality segment and this makes IRONMAN Colombo 70.3 an ideal icebreaker of sorts in Sri Lanka's quest to uplift the sports tourism sector in the country. Amongst the total participants, 78% were male and 22% were female athletes.

However, the triathlon also garnered immense interest from 68% of female supporters who turned up to witness the event unfold. A majority of the athletes were between the ages of 25 and 50, though there were some participants who also covered the age groups of below 25 and over 50.

A majority of the participants were recorded from Europe with 40% having had taken part in the first triathlon. Other participants hailed from countries such as the USA, Canada, from the Middle East, Australia and participants from African countries and countries from North East and South East Asia.

Many of the athletes had conducted their own research about Sri Lanka in order to familiarize themselves with what they were about to witness during the event. Those within the 25-35 age group, gathered information from sites such as Trip Advisor and Facebook.