

Nearly 3,000 competitors wait for palace race



RUNNING MAN: Mark Jaggard fine tunes his triathlon training
Picture: George Reszeter Order No. 314801

ATHLETES FLEX THEIR MUSCLES

THERE are only four days to go until almost 3,000 competitors from across the UK descend on Blenheim Palace for its first triathlon.

With 2,800 entrants in its first year, the Blenheim Triathlon is the second largest event of its kind and Sunday will see competitors swim across the lake before biking and running around the palace grounds at Woodstock.

Event director Nick Rusling said: "It's a great privilege for us to be holding this event at Blenheim Palace and for it to be the second largest event of its kind in its first year is absolutely fantastic."

"It says a lot about the venue as well as the growing popularity of triathlon."

"Seeing more than 2,000 bikes lined up in Blenheim's courtyard is going to be a great sight."

"We hope to develop the event after its first year and establish it on the triathlon calendar."

The organisers say it will be a particularly special event because a large number of first-timers will be lining up alongside elite triathletes.

By Emma-Kate Lidbury

The *Oxford Mail*, which is supporting the event, has teamed up with Oxford-based international triathlete Mark Jaggard to offer competitors some top tips.

Mark, 36, works for Oxford City Council as a planning manager. He started triathlons in 2000 and



the blenheim triathlon

within three years had a place in the British team for the World Championships in New Zealand.

He has recently been selected for the European Triathlon Championships in Switzerland and is hoping to qualify for this year's World Triathlon Championships.

His advice is:
● Read the information pack so nothing comes as a surprise. Preparation is vital.

- Train hard until a week before the race, then start to 'taper' training up to race day with some short sessions.
- Nutrition is critical. Eat plenty of carbohydrates in the week leading up to the race — don't assume you can leave it to the night before and just eat one huge pasta meal.
- Remember to drink plenty before and during the race. Carry a large water bottle on the bike to stay hydrated.
- Make sure you have checked all your equipment, most obviously your bike, but also your wetsuit and running shoes.
- Try to have eight hours' sleep the night before the race but also get a good night's sleep on Friday night.
- Finally, remember to enjoy it. This will be one of the most picturesque triathlons held in the UK this year.

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See Friday's *Oxford Mail* for how reporter Emma-Kate Lidbury is training for the event and Saturday's paper for the route map and timetable.

Thousands are set for Blenheim Triathlon

THERE are only two days to go until almost 3,000 competitors from across the UK descend on Blenheim Palace for its first triathlon — and organisers say it is shaping up to be an event to remember.

With 2,800 entrants in its first year, the Blenheim Triathlon is the second largest event of its kind in the country, and this Sunday will see competitors swim across the lake before biking and running around the palace grounds in Woodstock.

Event director Nick Rusling said: "It is a great privilege for us to be holding this event at Blenheim Palace and for it to be the second largest event of its kind in its first year is absolutely fantastic. It says a lot about the venue as well as the growing popularity of triathlon."



"Seeing more than 2,000 bikes lined up in Blenheim's courtyard is going to be a great sight and we're all hugely looking forward to it."

"We hope to develop the event after its first year and establish it on the triathlon calendar."

The organisers say it will be a particularly special event because a large number of first-timers will be lining up alongside elite triathletes.

The *Oxford Times*, which is among the sponsors, has teamed up with Oxford-based

international triathlete Mark Jaggard to offer competitors some top tips before the event.

Mr Jaggard, 36, works for Oxford City Council as a planning manager. He fell into triathlon in 2000 and within three years had a place in the British team for the World Championships.

He has recently been selected for the European Triathlon Championships in Switzerland and is hoping to qualify for this year's World Triathlon Championships.

He says: "Come race day you want to be as relaxed as possible and be able to concentrate on the race, so preparation is important. Read the information pack the organisers send out so nothing comes as a surprise."

"I would recommend training hard up until a week

before the race and then start to 'taper' training up to race day. There is no point turning up on the start line with tired muscles or an injury, but equally you don't want to be too relaxed, so do some short, easy swim, bike and

run sessions. Nutrition is critical. Eat plenty of carbohydrates in the week leading up to the race so your body has plenty of energy to draw upon on race day. Don't assume you can leave it to the night before and just eat one huge pasta meal. This will just make you feel sluggish the next day. Remember to drink plenty before and during the race.

"Make sure you have checked all your equipment, most obviously your bike, but also your wetsuit and running shoes."

"Try to have eight hours of sleep the night before the race but also get a good night's sleep on Friday night."

"Finally, remember to enjoy it. This will be one of the most picturesque triathlons held in the UK this year."



Mark Jaggard