



**5 OCTOBER, 2019**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

The population of Stewart Island was almost doubled in size with over 250 runners and supporters arriving on Thursday and Friday, for Saturday's inaugural Rakiura Challenge Trail Run.

Athletes and supporters travelled from throughout New Zealand to take part in this new trail running event on the Rakiura Track on Stewart Island, New Zealand's southern-most Great Walk.

Runners checked into the Race Village in Oban township, Halfmoon Bay, on Friday night for a Race Briefing and pre-event pasta meal and evening. This was followed on Saturday night by a prize-giving and post-race banquet featuring local seafood and other produce. On both these nights, organisers catered for groups approximately the size of the population of Stewart Island.

Heavy rain late Friday night cleared and Saturday was cold, but fine and sunny, for the start of the race at 8.30am at the entrance to the Rakiura National Park on Lee Bay Road.

The field was led from the start by Nelson runner Patrick Higgins in the Men's field, and Rotorua runner Sue Crowley in the Women's field. Patrick Higgins was closely followed by Richard Ford from Cromwell, with Sue Crowley well clear of the rest of the women's field.

The 32km course took runners onto Maori Beach (overlooking Foveaux Strait), where there is a historic sawmill site, then onto the 8km mark (a second historic site on the course), the Log Hauling machinery on the track above Maori Beach. From there, the undulating track took runners through picturesque and regenerating forest to North Arm Hut in Paterson Inlet, and then to Sawdust Bay and Kaipipi Landing, the other historic sawmilling sites on the track.

The Men's race was always very close with Richard Ford closing in on Patrick Higgins at Kaipipi Bay, 6km from the finish. Aware of this, Higgins was able to extend his lead when he reached Fern Gully Road, 2kms from the finish in Oban township, Halfmoon Bay.

Race Director Chris Cox said "I had expected the winning time to be just under 3 hours, Higgins' winning time of 2:32:23 was outstanding".

Ford finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in 2:33:32, another outstanding time, followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> placed runner from Queenstown, Hywel Dinnick, who also finished well under 3 hours.

In the Women's field, Sue Crowley was always clearly in the lead finishing in 3:09:41, with Porirua runner Jean Beaumont finishing in 3:24:07, followed by Dunedin runner Shona Mackie. Both Crowley and Beaumont finished 1<sup>st</sup> in their 40-49 and 50-59 age groups respectively.

Race Director Chris Cox said “when entries opened for this inaugural race on 1 April this year, the event filled in half a day, myself and the organising group were always confident that this new trail running event would prove to be popular and become a regular feature on the Trail Running Calendar in New Zealand. Most runners were using this race as an opportunity to visit the Island and some of them were using it as a lead-in training run for the annual Kepler Challenge Mountain Race, being held in early December in Te Anau. Response from runners after the event was overwhelmingly positive, with runners enjoying the Track and the variety of terrain, stunning scenery and bush”.

Stewart Island Promotions Association Chairperson and the Event’s Chairperson Aaron Joy said “This event has brought a lot to the Island. The population almost doubled over the weekend. Accommodation and travel to the Island was booked to the maximum. We had a huge challenge catering for a group that was almost the size of the Island’s population. It was a great opportunity to showcase Stewart Island as a point of destination for runners and visitors, along with the seafood and other produce that the students from the Southland Institute of Technology, led by Chef Anthony Vickerstaff, prepared for the pre-and-post-race evenings that were held in the Community Centre”.

Next year’s Rakiura Challenge Trail Run will be held on Saturday, 3 October.

For further information, contact Chris Cox, Race Director, on [chris@chriscox.co.nz](mailto:chris@chriscox.co.nz), phone 027 293 8309.

## **RESULTS**

### **Open Men**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Patrick Higgins (Nelson)	2:32:23
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Richard Ford (Cromwell)	2:33:33
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Hywel Dinnick (Queenstown)	2:41:41

### **Open Women**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Sue Crowley (Rotorua)	3:09:41
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Jean Beaumont (Porirua)	3:24:07
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Shona Mackie (Dunedin)	3:29:47

### **Masters Men (40-49)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Kelvin Meade (Invercargill)	2:53:07
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Simon Green (Queenstown)	3:00:57
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Nigel Robertson (Christchurch)	3:05:31

### **Masters Women (40-49)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Sue Crowley (Rotorua)	3:09:41
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Di Cooper (Picton)	3:40:46
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Annie Bathurst (Christchurch)	4:00:56

### **Masters Men (50-59)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Kelly McSoriley (Invercargill)	3:26:28
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Adam Cowie (Invercargill)	3:27:35
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Grant Ritchie (Dunedin)	3:30:16



**Masters Women (50-59)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Jean Beaumont (Porirua)	3:24:07
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Billie Marshall (Wellington)	3:46:30
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Sheryl Wright (Dunedin)	4:04:15

**Masters Men (60-99)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Graeme Lear (Havelock)	3:34:35
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Stephen Lindsay (Napier)	3:56:56

**Masters Women (60-99)**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Caroline Treadaway (Auckland)	6:21:59
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Annie Gallaway (Queenstown)	7:06:11

**Stewart Island Runners to Finish**

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	Poppy LeQuesene	3:59:00
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Jess Kany	5:10:31