

Media release for immediate use

Perfect conditions for Motatapu Off-Road Marathon

The Motatapu 42.2km off road marathon course was in perfect condition for runners, traversing the iconic Motatapu, Glencoe and Soho high country alpine valleys today to the finish line in Arrowtown.

Vajin Armstrong of Christchurch won the marathon today completing in 2hr:51m:41s. John Winsbury's course record of 2hr.38m.13s remains intact.

"I'm feeling good, it was a nice day out there, perfect conditions, perfect running temperature, nice track conditions," says Armstrong.

"I have never done it before so I didn't really know what to expect I just knew it was going to go downhill after 30kms so I was looking forward to that."

"The landscape was really beautiful, I didn't know there was going to be so many river crossings at the end, so that was definitely entertaining. They were really cold so you're feet kind of get numb and then its hard to get moving once you come out again."

"Jason Cameron and I ran together for the first 12 or so kilometres and then on a little downhill I got away from him and was away by myself for the rest of the course."

"I was really happy about my time, I was sort of looking, somewhere around 2 hours 50 would have been good. I've got some big other races coming up in the next few weeks so I didn't want to totally destroy myself but I'm really happy with the time and the effort."

"I'll definitely be back next year."

First time Motatapu competitor Sarah Coghlan of Queenstown was the first female across the line narrowly beating the course record of 3:19:56 set by Melissa Moon with a new time of 3:19:48 (tentative times only).

"I quite enjoyed the course but the last four kilometres, trying to recover after crossing the rivers was tough."

"I think I'll be back next year, it was fun!"

"I'm very happy with my time, it was better than I thought."

The marathon today saw competitors achieve a lot more than completing New Zealand's third largest marathon. While many were competing for the time across the line, others were out there for a myriad of reasons including to raise funds for the Christchurch earthquake Red Cross 2011 appeal, Pink Pilates, and Wonder Walkers.

Rob Fyfe, CEO of Air New Zealand was a first time Motatapu marathon competitor today, running to train for Everest Base Camp that he is attending in six weeks. "It was really, really good fun. The scenery is just stunning and we couldn't ask for better conditions."

"The river crossings right at the end are tough. You think you're almost at the end and then you've got this half dozen river crossings and that is quite hard work but it's just fabulous, something really unique. I'll absolutely be back next year, I just loved it." Fyfe says.

Fyfe was running in support of Christchurch and says, "It's great to see so many people from Christchurch here and the Earthquake Relief concert later on this afternoon is just going to be a great thing for Christchurch." Fyfe says.

Dame Susan Devoy walked the 42.2km marathon for her recently launched Wonder Walkers (www.wonderwalkers.co.nz) – an initiative to encourage women to become more active through walking.

Her walk was also in support of 'Team Pink Pilates' to raise money for the Pink Pilates Trust, funding New Zealand women who are recovering from cancer through the Pink Pilates programme. 100% of funds raised today go direct to Canterbury women, to fund them through the Pink Pilates programme.





For three of the 642 strong field, this was their seventh Motatapu; competing each year in the event since it began in 2005.

Kelvin and Helen Hanson of Mosgiel say of their seventh Motatapu, "It was a great ride, for sure we will be back next year, we are the only couple to complete the marathon all seven times, and prefer off-road running. We used to the mountain bike through the course, before the Motatapu even started. Our aim is to complete 10 years of the marathon, we will be back again next year." they say. They completed the race together with a time of 5.07.27.

A further 11 competitors have returned every year since 2005 for the mountain bike.

Sally Hickering of Christchurch completed her first ever marathon today and in the wake of the Christchurch earthquake says, "If there is one thing this earthquake has taught us, it is the importance of living each day to the max, you never know what is around the corner, or what tomorrow may hold.

The Icebreaker 42.2km off-road marathon is just one of five Motatapu events all held on the same day; which include the R&R Sport Adventure Race, Arrowtown.com Miner's Trail 15km mountain run, Speight's Summit 47km mountain bike and the new invitation only half ironman length triathlon swimming Glendhu Bay, cycling the mountain bike and finishing with the Miner's Trail run. The Motatapu events, in it's seventh year running typically traverse through three remote and spectacular high country properties from Wanaka through to Arrowtown, The event won the 2010 NZAEP awards for Best Event.

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For further information or high-resolution images for media use please contact:

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Full race results available at www.motatapu.com

