

# News Release



## HISTORY OF ST. ANTHONY'S TRIATHLON

St. Anthony's Triathlon began in 1984 as the Tampa Bay Triathlon and was part of the 10-city U.S. Triathlon Series. That year 600 athletes completed the 1.5K (0.9 mi.) swim, 40K (24.8 mi.) bike and 10K (6.2 mi.) run at Fort DeSoto. The following year St. Anthony's gained ownership of the event and moved it to the waterfront of downtown St. Petersburg.

Today, St. Anthony's Triathlon is considered to be one of the sport's leading events in the U.S. Thousands of professional and amateur athletes of all ages and abilities, and from all around the world, will again gather along St. Petersburg's waterfront to compete in the 33rd St. Anthony's Triathlon.

What began as a single race has grown to encompass three events -- the Olympic distance St. Anthony's Triathlon, the St. Anthony's Sprint Triathlon and the Meek & Mighty Triathlon. More than 3,500 athletes from 41 states, the District of Columbia and eight countries participated in the 2015 events.

Active.com selected St. Anthony's Triathlon as one of the 12 "must-do" triathlons for 2015, calling it "one of the best early-season triathlons in the U.S." In 2015, CompleteTri.com included St. Anthony's Triathlon on its inaugural list of "10 favorite destination races in the U.S."

### Milestones

**1994:** St. Anthony's Triathlon became an official stop on the Triathlon Pro Tour and was one of only 12 prestigious races in the world. The event also served as a qualifying race for the Ironman World Triathlon Championship in Hawaii.

**1999:** The International Triathlon Union (ITU) chose St. Anthony's Triathlon as the Pan-Am Games Qualifying event for U.S. athletes and designated the race as an ITU points race. After two successful years as an ITU points race, St. Anthony's was awarded World Cup status. For three years, St. Anthony's was the only U.S. race to produce an ITU Triathlon World Cup.

**2002:** St. Anthony's Triathlon was named "Best Event (over 500 participants)" by *Florida Sports Magazine*.

**2003:** St. Anthony's Triathlon was chosen as the first of six races held across the country in the USA Triathlon-Race to Athens Series.

**2005:** St. Anthony's Triathlon moved its race to Vinoy Park. The race grew to 3,500 competitors and sold out in five days.

**2006:** St. Anthony's Triathlon sold out in five hours, the fastest in St. Anthony's history.

**2008:** St. Anthony's Triathlon celebrated its 25th anniversary as one of the largest Olympic-distance triathlons in the United States. The race welcomed a record number of more than 4,000 amateur and professional athletes from 48 states and 17 countries.

**2011:** In 2011, the St. Anthony's Triathlon became part of the Ironman Tradition as the race joined the World Triathlon Corporation (WTC) 5150 Triathlon Series.

**2013:** In its 30<sup>th</sup> year, the St. Anthony's Triathlon was the first event of the 2013 global 5150 Triathlon Series. St. Anthony's, an international distance race, offered athletes coveted points toward 5150 U.S. Championship qualification. It was the largest international distance triathlon series in the world and the first non-drafting international race series of its kind, offering a competitive platform for professional and age-group athletes vying for a \$65,000 purse.

**2014:** St. Anthony's Triathlon organizers added a sprint race on the same course as the international distance event but with shorter distances of 750-meter swim, 20K bike and 5K run. The St. Anthony's Triathlon Sprint race was selected as the 2014 Paratriathlon Florida Regional Championship event by USA Triathlon (USAT). The event hosted several Paralympic hopefuls vying to be part of Team USA when the sport of paratriathlon makes its debut at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games in Brazil.

**2015:** USAT named St. Anthony's Triathlon the Florida Regional Qualifier for the USA Triathlon Olympic Distance Championship in Milwaukee in August.

### **Meek & Mighty Triathlon**

In 1988, St. Anthony's Hospital expanded the race from one to two days and included a sprint distance triathlon for kids. In 1993, organizers added an adult division to the race. Both divisions combined in 1994 and became the Meek & Mighty Triathlon that is traditionally held the Saturday before the big race, attracting more than 1,000 kids and novice adults.

**2014:** In its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the Meek & Mighty race was selected the only Florida qualifier for the 2014 Hy-Vee Kids Triathlon Championship.

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