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COURSE RECORD AND BACK TO BACK WINNER IN QUEENSTOWN

A new course record for a new men's winner and back to back victories in the women's race were the features of the Air New Zealand Queenstown International Marathon today.

The second running of the event saw a sold-out capacity field of 9000 in various events take to the largely off-road courses that took competitors from Millbrook in Arrowtown, past Lake Hayes and through Frankton to the finish line in the heart of Queenstown, in near perfect conditions.

Tony Payne proved too quick in the men's field, posting an impressive 2:30:29 to break the course record of James Parsons, the Aucklanders made his move at the midway point when in a lead group of four and ran strongly through to the finish.

"I tried to take my time, the race starts in the second half and I applied pressure before halfway and then kept ticking off the k's. I just wanted to get through the mid-point of the race and then apply the pressure, I am really happy to get the win.

"The worst point was the hill at about 30k, but I gritted my teeth and got through it and a bit of a headwind. Coming home the crowd was fantastic, the volunteers were great, there was great organization the whole way.

"I have learned a lot of lessons through a lot of failures, it is good to finally put those lessons to good use and come away with a win. This was just spectacular, the scenery of course was amazing, I loved it."

Incredibly second place was taken by 46 year old Graeme Taylor (Nelson), showing the value of experience on a tough course, Taylor bided his time and ran powerfully over the latter stages to move clear of 2014 champion James Parsons (Napier) and eventual third place getter John Csongei (Australia).

The women's race proved more clear cut, with Victoria Beck overcoming a gastric bug to lead from the start, establishing a six minute lead over Mel Aitken before the midway point and then holding on, despite not quite holding on to her breakfast!

"I have to apologise to anyone that was near me with about 500m to go, I lost a battle I was having with my stomach and was ill on the side of the road. I have been struggling with a bug for the last three weeks leading into the race and was a bit

stressed as to how I was going to go, but I was able to get the margin early and hold on to the lead.

“I really enjoyed the race, despite how I was feeling later on in the event, it is a beautiful race, I really loved it.”

Mel Aitken repeated her runner-up finish from last year, finishing just over eight minutes behind Beck, while third place went to Danielle Nicolson (Dunedin).

The event is already being tagged as ‘iconic’ with capacity fields and over 1300 entrants from overseas and 90% coming from outside the Queenstown Lakes District, the event is delivering great economic upside for the region and further highlighting Queenstown as a leading global tourist destination.

Air New Zealand ‘walked the walk’ – not only are they naming rights partner to the event, but they had 240 staff participating on the day.

“Air New Zealand is so proud to support this world class event, said Meghan Blair, Air New Zealand Manager Sponsorship and Communities. “It’s great to see so many people travel from around the world to take part and support the runners. The conditions today were perfect for running and it was great that the rain held off so everyone could enjoy the beautiful scenery that Queenstown has to offer.”

Event CEO Dave Beeche was thrilled with the way the day played out.

“Credit to the community of Queenstown, the volunteers and to all who came and took part on a fantastic day. From the kids in the fun race to those in the 10k and the ASICS Half Marathon and of course the more than 2000 who took on the Air New Zealand Marathon, it has been a day of great stories and personal milestones.

“This event is a significant one on the calendar for the region and for the country. We have 39 countries taking part today, we have a film crew from China, I think already this event is on the global map as an iconic marathon, one famous for the stunning scenery and the off road course and the hospitality of New Zealanders.

“With the support of Air New Zealand, the Queenstown Lakes District Council and all of our partners and stakeholders, this is an event that will continue to grow and will be around for a long time to come”

The Marathon made a significant donation to the Queenstown Trails Trust, the Official charity of the event and a great supporter with much of the event raced on Trails between Arrowtown and Queenstown. Thanks to the capacity field and further donations from participants, the Trust is better off to the tune of \$41,388.70, money that will go towards the upkeep of the Trails in the region.

Air New Zealand Queenstown International Marathon Results

Air New Zealand Marathon

Men

- 1 Tony Payne, Auckland, 2:30:29
- 2 Graeme Taylor, Nelson, 2:35:17
- 3 John Csongei, Australia, 2:38:23

Women

- 1 Victoria Beck, Dunedin, 2:55:52
- 2 Mel Aitken, Dunedin, 3:03:23
- 3 Danielle Nicolson, 3:17:50

ASICS Half Marathon

Men

- 1 Mike Phillips, Christchurch, 1:14:18
- 2 Adam Jaques, Christchurch, 1:14:21
- 3 Thijs Hubber, Queenstown, 1:14:45

Women

- 1 Jasmin Patterson, Queenstown, 1:26:07
- 2 Olivia Bird, Christchurch, 1:27:08
- 3 Lizzie Spencer, Christchurch, 1:27:24

10km

Men

- 1 Archie Ritchie, Queenstown, 37:53
- 2 Gareth Benic, Dunedin, 38:57
- 3 Aleksandr Cheifetz, Queenstown, 38:44

Women

- 1 Julie Wilson, Oamaru, 42:25
- 2 Lucy Annan, Tarras, 44:03
- 3 Liz Eade, Porirua, 44:33

Full results will be posted at www.airnzqueenstownmarathon.co.nz

Further images available on request by return email

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