



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship Will Return to Greater Zion in 2022

*2021 event shifts to a single-day event on Saturday, September 18 due to continuing global travel restrictions, impacting the number of athletes able to compete*

**St. George, Utah** (August 17, 2021) – Like many events, the IRONMAN® 70.3® World Championship has been impacted by the Covid-19 global pandemic, but in an interesting turn of events, the impacts mean that the IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship will return to St. George in 2022.

IRONMAN announced today that the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, previously scheduled for a Women's Race on Friday, September 17 and a Men's Race on Saturday, September 18, will be consolidated to a one-day Saturday event. Due to travel and border restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of qualified athletes able to participate has decreased significantly. After much consideration, race officials determined that attendance would not warrant a two-day event.

"We have continued to monitor border and travel restrictions closely, and it is increasingly clear that these restrictions are not likely to be relaxed in time for most international athletes to be able to race in St. George," said Andrew Messick, President and Chief Executive Officer for The IRONMAN® Group, in a press release. "We have a special host partner in St. George and its surrounding communities, and we are looking forward to being able to host a full international two-day race in 2022."

The 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship will still serve as a true championship event, the first of any IRONMAN World Championship to be held since 2019. Bringing elite triathletes from places near and far, the competition will feature Tokyo Olympic Gold Medalists in triathlon, Norway's Kristian Blummenfelt and Bermuda's Flora Duffy.

Champions of the IRONMAN 70.3 North American Championship, contested in St. George earlier this year, Daniela Ryf of Switzerland and Lionel Sanders of Canada are expected to be front-runners in this World Championship. Ryf is a nine-time World Champion and Sanders has won 28 IRONMAN 70.3 triathlons.



Overall, between 3,000 and 4,000 athletes are projected to participate and will bring their families and friends to Southern Utah for IRONMAN Week.

With the exception of holding a separate race day for men and women, all aspects of the race will be conducted in World Championship fashion. All athletes participating in the event have previously qualified for the world championship and will race accordingly. The race will be broadcast across the globe to millions of viewers. IRONMAN week will still include IRONMAN Village Wednesday through Sunday, Land of Endurance 5K Fun Run on Thursday, an IRONKIDS event on Friday, plus lots of opportunities to get involved as volunteers, spectators and engaged businesses.

"In spite of the conditions in the world, this race will be an elite and prestigious event," said Kevin Lewis, Director of the Greater Zion Convention & Tourism Office. "It will showcase the world's best triathletes competing for a title in a destination that rivals the most scenic and intriguing places in the world."

Economic impacts of the event remain strong with direct impact projected at \$12-15 million. The opportunity to host the World Championship again in 2022 will bring an additional \$20-\$25 million next year. Since its first event here in 2010, IRONMAN has infused more than \$100 million into the local economy.

With the announcement to combine the men's and women's race in 2021, IRONMAN announced changes to the 2022 race as well. The 2022 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, previously slated for Taupō, New Zealand, will now happen on October 28 and 29 in St. George, returning to a two-day format.

With continuing uncertainty of travel into and out of New Zealand, officials felt confident in the opportunity in St. George and wanted to give the global racing community a chance to experience this epic race destination. Moving the race to St. George in 2022 gives international athletes another chance to race in the Land of Endurance, and it rewards the local efforts to host a world championship event.

"It's clear that IRONMAN officials respect and appreciate St. George and our surrounding communities," Lewis said. "They have confidence in our ability to host a World Championship. They have witnessed the professionalism in our communities and the agencies that support the race. They've seen our capabilities, they've felt the spirit of our people and they've reveled in the beauty of our landscapes. In a time when many things in the world are unclear, IRONMAN officials are certain of our hosting abilities and our hospitality. IRONMAN considers this a World Championship destination and they know athletes will want to return."

The previously scheduled return of IRONMAN St. George (the full distance triathlon) to the area in 2022 remains unaffected and is slated for Saturday, May 7. Earlier this year, IRONMAN announced that event will serve as the 2022 North American IRONMAN Championship, granting St. George the distinction of hosting more championship events than any other host community in the world.



That impressive list now includes IRONMAN 70.3 North American Championship, the IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship (twice), and the IRONMAN North American Championship.

More information on the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship is available at [IRONMAN.GreaterZion.com](https://www.ironman.com/70.3).

#### **About Greater Zion**

Located in the southwest corner of Utah, Greater Zion is a destination that offers more than 2,400 square miles of adventure and inspiration. Zion National Park, the fourth most visited National Park in the United States, is the premier attraction, but Zion is only the beginning. Four state parks and a multitude of year-round recreational lands set the stage for a burgeoning mountain biking scene, some of the best off-highway vehicle riding in the country, scenic and challenging play at 13 top-rated golf courses, world-class cultural performances at Tuacahn Center for the Arts and so much more. The vibrant communities of St. George, Springdale, Hurricane, Ivins and towns in between offer a wide range of lodging options, dining experiences and access to outdoor pursuits through local outfitters and tour companies. Home to the 2021 IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship, Greater Zion also is a world-class destination for sporting events, conferences and meetings. The Greater Zion Convention and Tourism Office is a transient-room-tax-funded entity of Washington County, Utah. For more information, please visit [GreaterZion.com](https://www.GreaterZion.com).