

‘Ferry Leaping’ Triathlon Returning to Lower

NORTH CAPE MAY- The event that had folks jumping off the Cape May-Lewes Ferry into the bay last year will return this summer.

The Escape the Cape Triathlon is scheduled here for June 8. Event founder Stephen Del Monte of Delmo Sports, said registration for the 2013 triathlon opened just three months before the event and the triathlon sold out in nine weeks.

“Being a first time event utilizing the Cape May-Lewes Ferry and having people jump off when its main purpose is to transport people across the bay, we had to work out the details,” said Del Monte. “I knew once we got the details worked out the event would sell out quickly because you can’t do this anywhere else on the East Coast.”

Escape the Cape included a jump from the ferry deck into the bay, a swim to shore, a run up the beach to the ferry grounds, hopping on a bicycle for a ride and finishing with either a 5K or a five mile run. The finish line was located on the boardwalk at the ferry terminal.

Del Monte participated in a similar event in San Francisco prior to the event in Lower Township, the Escape Alcatraz Triathlon, which sends triathletes on a 1.5 mile swim from Alcatraz Island to the San Francisco shoreline, an 18-mile bike ride through the Presidio and an eight-mile trail run through Golden Gate Park.

Heath Gehrke, operations director of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry, said Escape the Cape was very well organized with safety as a priority.

“They had a huge team there to make sure that when people jumped off into the water, they were taken care of,” he said.

Gehrke said the ferry was always interested in events that can bring thousands of people to the terminal and showcase their vessels, food and beverage services and the view of the bay from the grounds.

Del Monte said economic impact of Escape the Cape on Lower Township exceeded \$500,000. The event was named one of the top five triathlete’s choice small races in the U.S., he said.

“We could not have done that without the DRBA (Delaware River and Bay Authority) having an open mind to create new events and Lower Township supporting DRBA in their decision,” said Del Monte.

Over 1,100 athletes have signed up for this year’s event with a total of 1,500 spots available. This year’s Escape the Cape will feature a kid’s event Saturday June 7.

“Don’t worry, they’re not jumping off the ferry,” said Del Monte.

Kids will swim from the beach near the ferry terminal for about 200 meters, come out of the water in Douglass Park, put on their running shoes and run to a finish line at the ferry terminal. The event takes place the day before the triathlon on “package pickup day,” for participants.

“There’s going to be 1,500 athletes on site cheering these kids on,” said Del Monte.

Kids who participate will receive a shirt, a medal and two-day pass to Morey’s Piers.

For the 2014 triathlon, the bicycle portion will remain mostly on Ferry Road.

“For our run, we’ve taken out about a half mile of soft sand,” said Del Monte.

More information is available on the website: www.delmosports.com.

A weekend of events is scheduled this summer to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry, according to Gehrke.