

Nation's largest fat bike beach race returns to North Carolina

An interview with Shawn Spencer, Race Director, US Open Fat Bike Beach Championship

WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH, NORTH CAROLINA, USA, February 13, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The US Open Fat Bike Beach Championship, the largest beach race in the nation, returns to Wrightsville Beach the weekend of March 27-29, 2020.

"The growth of the Fat Bike Beach Championship is directly related to the rapid growth of the leisure sport of fat biking," said Shawn Spencer, Race Director. "It's an awesome sport, great exercise, and a fun way to explore the barrier islands in an environmentally friendly way.

"The Fat Bike Beach Championship is a race on the beach in front of our host hotel, Blockade Runner, at Wrightsville Beach. There are two events, with multiple age groups, plus a relay division. The two events are the 1-hour and the 2-hour races. We build a one-half mile loop course on the beach the morning of the event, utilizing the natural surfaces of soft and hard sand below the sand dunes. The two-hour racers will start at 2 PM this year, and the 1-hour bikers roll out at 4:10 PM.

"The 2020 course will be more natural. In 2018 the Corps of Engineers was dredging, and there were huge pipes we had to traverse. In 2019 we used a mini-excavator and dug some trenches and built some massive climbs over obstacles. This year we are going more 'organic' and utilizing volunteer labor to hand- shape the course. The course will be marked with sandbags and marking tape. Some unique dismounting options will be new for 2020.



Bikers line up for the elite division US Open Fat Bike Beach Championship race in 2019 – Courtesy Robert B Butler



2019 Elite Champions Robert and Philicia Marion of Mount Airy, North Carolina – Courtesy Robert B Butler

"The race is dictated by the tides. When the tide is low, the bottom part of the course is packed sand, providing faster speeds, plus an opportunity for the racers to recover from the upper part of the course. Fat bike tires will go most anywhere on the sand, but they definitely roll faster and easier on the hard pack when the tide goes out. The soft sand is a grind. The longshore currents also cut into the sand and sometimes leave us with a sizeable drop off at low tide.

"We expect to see some returning champions this year. Rumor is that Robert and Philicia Marion from Mount Airy will return to defend their titles. They will definitely be the ones to watch in the professional field.

"Past champions say the Fat Bike Beach Championship is harder than the Leadville 100. The Leadville 100 is a 100-mile mountain bike race that starts above 10,000 feet. To have the Fat Bike Beach Championship compared to the Leadville 100 is quite a compliment if a hard race is what you are looking for.

"Alpha Mortgage is the Presenting Sponsor again for 2020. Without their contribution, the event would not be as substantial. Legacy sponsor Bike Cycles is responsible for the event organization, and our host, Blockade Runner Beach Resort, makes the race possible. With Waterman's Brewing and Rhino Demolition now on board, this year will be a super fun weekend.

"This year, we are hosting a sandcastle building contest before the race. The sandcastle event will be judged, with cash prizes awarded to first and second place. The sandcastles will be on the course as obstacles. The sandcastle contest starts at noon and ends at 3:45 PM.

"Charity is a great part of the event. This year, racers have donated fifty percent more, to date, compared to last year, for the Wrightsville Beach Foundation. We expect to have the largest donation for the foundation in the history of the event," said Spencer.

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