



FAQ's about the Professional Triathletes Organisation

I'm confused? What is the PTO and is it different from the PTU announced last year?

The Professional Triathletes Organisation (PTO) is the same group as the former PTU--we have just changed our name. When the group was first formed last year it was basically a number of professional triathletes who just love the sport of triathlon and wanted to have a positive influence and see the sport grow. Of course, we are professional athletes, so to be quite honest, we were not too sure how best to achieve this, but our goal was to come together and exchange ideas as a group to determine how we might be able to support and help the sport we love so much. We initially chose the original name Professional Triathlon Union, because we felt we were united in a goal of supporting the sport, and as we were a body of athletes from all over the world, we thought the generic term "union" captured that sentiment (somewhat along the lines of ITU's and ETU's use of the term in their names.) Unfortunately, the use of the term "Union" ended up causing confusion around what we were trying to do.

So it was a mistake to have "union" as part of you name?

Yep, one big enormous bonk, because it gave the mistaken view that our purpose was similar to unions in industries, and that is not what we are about.

What is the PTO about?

Our mission is simple: *To Celebrate the Sport of Triathlon*. We seek to showcase the passion, talents, determination, struggles and achievements of the dedicated professionals who seek to realise the highest levels of the sport and inspire all those who participate in triathlon, from the seasoned age grouper to the newbie and every single person who ever thought for even a moment, "I would like to do a triathlon."

What will this look like in the triathlon community?

Our role is more like a trade association, and our members are ambassadors in the community actively promoting the sport and sharing their passion, insights, struggles, accomplishments, failures and all the crazy and beautiful moments that make our sport so singularly wonderful. We want to see our sport grow and we want to support and help all the race organisers, from the large international companies to the small local organisers, the governing bodies, the local tri clubs, the media, the sponsors, the volunteers--everybody really, who loves the sport as much as we do.

So, the original launch of the PTU was a bit of a bust?

Not at all--it was actually a great success. As we mentioned at the time, we just wanted to get out there and show that we can come together as a group and try help our sport grow and grab its proper place at the adult table of the sports world. True, we weren't really sure how we could do this, after all, we pretty much train all the time and our members are scattered around the globe, so it's hard to get everyone together regularly to formulate and execute a cohesive strategy. As a result, we did get a bit of grief for not knowing exactly what we wanted to do and who we really were--some of it fair, some not so much--but what the original announcement *did* do was show to the community that we are able to come together, and this attracted some passionate people and groups like Wasserman who saw the potential of what we were hoping to achieve and were able to provide some direction and leadership and create The Collins Cup.

How does The Collins Cup help the sport grow?

By adopting a proven format like the Ryder Cup with its nationalistic intensity, and having a point system that creates drama throughout the race, The Collins Cup is designed to be a compelling live TV event that appeals not only to the fans of endurance sports, but also to the general sports enthusiast. The result of this exposure to a larger audience is that more people will come to see appreciate the challenge and fun of the sport and to take up triathlon. Then they will enter local events, join their associations, move up to larger events, buy kit, etc. and become members of the community, which benefits everyone!!!

Why didn't you work with some of the existing race organisers or governing bodies in establishing The Collins Cup?

You know, we thought about it, but we saw this as an opportunity to be able have our own platform to celebrate the sport. We respect and appreciate all the

organisers, associations and governing bodies that have worked so hard to make our sport so wonderful. Of course, all of the groups have lots of things on their plate. For us it will be a major focus to make The Collins Cup a massive celebration where the world of triathlon comes together for a weekend in a festival type environment, with a bit of healthy bantering and slagging about which region is the best in the world and a competition to decide it. This is not unlike, say, the PGA Golf Championship, which is one of the four majors in golf and is put on by the Professional Golfers Association, an organisation like the PTO, consisting of professionals.

How did Wasserman get involved?

The team at Wasserman has been amazing. They got involved early in the process as they saw that in the group of professionals there is a great platform to grow the sport. While we clearly had the desire, it was Wasserman's vision and leadership that has made this a reality. Wasserman has been able to put a worldwide team into motion to support the effort and we would be no where without their help. It is a tribute to the promise of the sport that Wasserman has seen an opportunity to be part of its evolution. In many ways, it was very helpful to have a group like Wasserman take a fresh look at the space and apply its expertise in the general sports business to see some exciting opportunities for us. A big thank you goes out to TEAM WASS.

Where will the inaugural Collins Cup be held?

This has not yet been determined, and Wasserman will coordinate host city bidding and selection.

Who are the members of the PTO? What benefits do they receive?

Any person who is a licensed as a professional by any recognised governing body or racing organisation is eligible to be a member. It is a voluntary choice to become a member. There will be a modest membership fee. As a not-for-profit entity, the PTO does not have as its goal a return to shareholders. Our goals are fairly modest: run a great event, invest in the growth of the sport, support the needs of our members as best we can, and maybe even provide a health plan, that would be nice. It will NOT be a requirement to be a member of the PTO in order enter any race.

Do you need to be a member of the PTO to be selected for The Collins Cup?

No. The Collins Cup will bring together the greatest triathletes in the world in a team competition to do battle to see who dominates the sport. We appreciate that some people may prefer not to be members of the PTO. No problem whatsoever. If an athlete is in the top of the rankings, he or she will qualify for The Collins Cup. Again, this is similar to the PGA Golf Championship, where many of the competitors are not members of the PGA. Also, there is no requirement for an athlete to compete in any race or series of races to qualify for The Collins Cup.

Tell us more about the PTO World Rankings?

The PTO World Ranking system will be an objective system to identify the finest triathletes in the world who are best qualified to represent their team in The Collins Cup. It will consider race results from all recognised racing authorities and all distances from Olympic to full IRONMAN races. Since the competitors in The Collins Cup will be racing a standard long distance course, there will be heavier weightings given to longer distance races.

What is next?

Well, right now we have our executive team and Wasserman focused on making The Collins Cup a huge success; enjoyable to all who participate and a spring board to help the sport grow and assumes its place alongside other major sports. Beyond that, it is hard to say, we are all on an exciting journey. Our sport has been blessed with so much history and so many fantastic people. It has grown from humble origins 40 years ago into the exciting sport it is today. This type of growth is not without some growing pains, but we are all part of a community that is greater than ourselves and if we are all patient with each other we can achieve great things. As our motto states: *Dum Spiro, Spero* (Whilst I Breathe I Hope.) We are still breathing and hoping!!!!

What's up with spelling Organisation with an "s" instead of "z", it looks weird?

Now you have hit on the most heated debate about our new name. In the English speaking world outside the United States--places like Great Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand--organisation is spelled with an "s". As a truly international group, it was decided to use the spelling with an "s". However, it was agreed if the USA wins the first Collins Cup, we will use the "z" spelling.

No doubt there will be many more questions as we roll out The Collins Cup and we will be providing as much information as we can when it becomes available.