

Motatapu events bigger than ever?

More overseas competitors are entering the popular off-road races

The Motatapu mountainbike race and associated multisport events have drawn a field of 4567 competitors – the largest in the event's history.

Saturday's race starts at Glendhu Bay, Wanaka and finishes at Wilcox Green in Arrowtown, with riders, runners and hikers passing through Motatapu, Soho and Glencoe stations.

Some of the terrain is usually not open to the public.

The event is owned by the Queenstown Trails Trust and is being organised by Lagardere Unlimited Oceania. Funds go back into Wakatipu trail maintenance and development.

Lagardere chief executive Dave Beeche says the biggest increase in competitors is from overseas (74 per cent growth) and Auckland (35 per cent growth), following a rejig of start times and a revamped marketing strategy.

Beeche described the Motatapu as "a must-do race for many", while creating high economic benefits for Wanaka, Arrowtown and Queenstown.

The average length of stay per competitor is 3.3 days, Beeche said.

Queenstown Trails Trust chief executive Mandy Kennedy said it was "incredible" to see how far the event had come in 11 years.

"Around 1300 competitors entered the first Motatapu back in 2005 across the marathon and mountain bike events only. To see such growth in both the amount of events and number of athletes is a great achievement," Kennedy said.

Fast Fasts

What: The Motatapu – five multisport events

51km Adventure Run 41 solo entries; 25 teams of two.

XTERRA Triathlon 44 teams (125 competitors); 116 individuals

47km Mountain Bike 2843 bikers

Off-Road Marathon 721 runners

15km Miners Trail 671 runners

When: Saturday March 7 (reserve day Sunday, March 8)

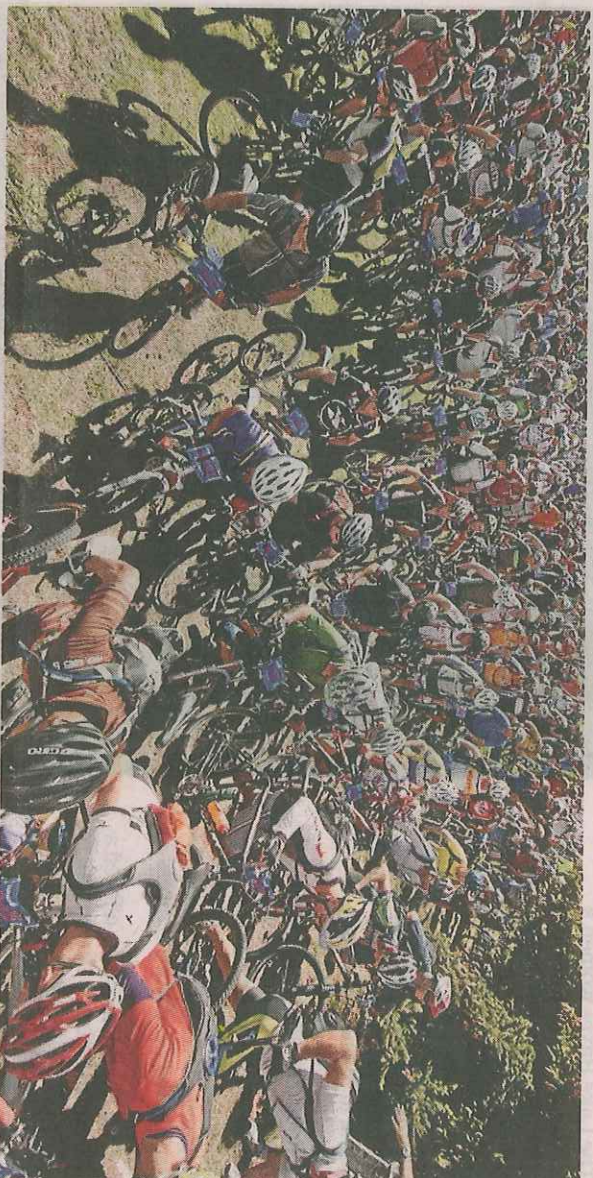
More information motatapu.com

Auckland, 15km Miners Trail) to 82 (John Falconer of Gore, off-road marathon).

A new trophy for the oldest finisher has been created this year in memory of regular Arrowtown participant Max McDermid, who passed away late last year.

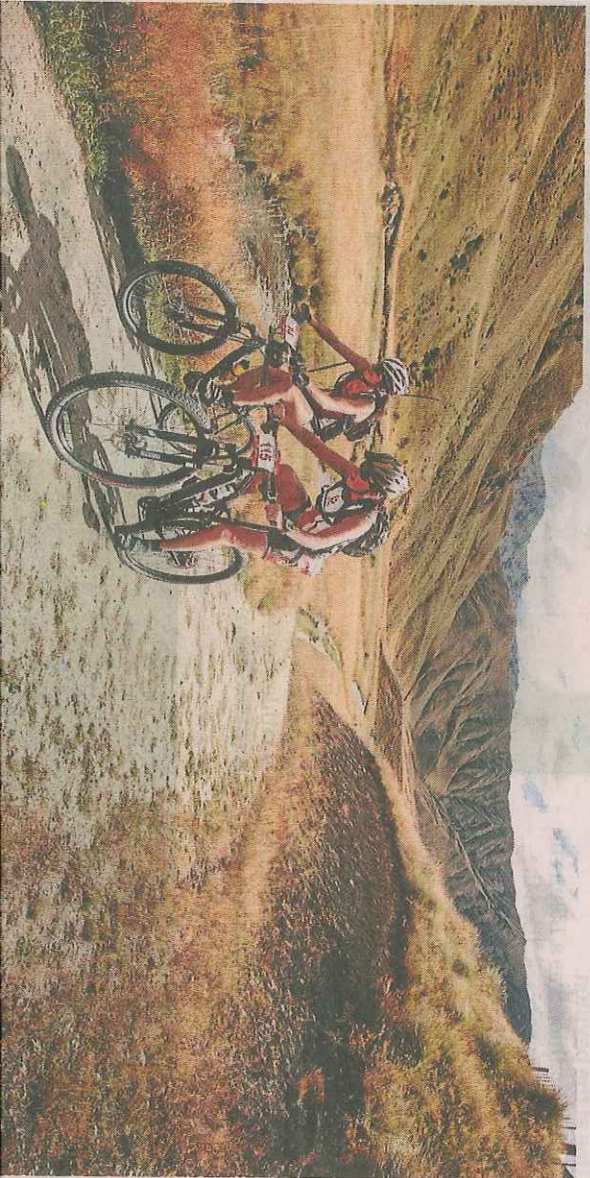
Spectators should note the finish line has been moved this year to Wilcox Green, still in Arrowtown, to enable more space.

The usual carnival atmosphere will welcome competitors over the line with music, live footage, food and drink.



Find your space: The 2011 Motatapu mountainbike race gets underway at Glendhu Bay, Wanaka.

Photo: FAIRFAX NZ



Scenic course: The 2014 Motatapu