



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

PERRY JOHN P. TENORIO
MVA MANAGING DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release-June 28, 2012

For further information, contact:
Perry John P. Tenorio, Managing Director
Marianas Visitors Authority
Telephone: (670) 664-3200/3201 Facsimile: (670) 664-3237
mva@my Marianas.com
www.my Marianas.com

SAIPAN DUO TOP FLIPPER TOURNAMENT

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) –Teenagers Kensuke Kimura and Eli Ebenezer Wong of the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) bested 28 other competitors to finish first in the 4th Annual Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament last Saturday (June 23), crossing the beach finish line in 00:25:01. 13-year-old Angel Marie Tan of the NMI topped the women's performance in 00:27:06.

The 1.5 km swim around the award-winning island of Managaha delivered crystal clear waters and rainbows overhead for competitors.

Second in the men's division were Kaito Yanai (00:27:10), comin in third is Takumi Sugie (00:28:31), all of the Northern Mariana Islands. In second place for the women's division is Yumi Ishiodori (00:27:44), and in third place is Hatsumi Watanabe (00:29:38), all of Japan.

Finishing first in their age categories were Ryuto Yanai in the Men's Division (00:36:09), and Karen Ann Irinaka in the Female Division (00:59:05) for ages 10 and under. For ages 11-12 in the Male Division went to Hiroto Yanai (00:29:10) and for ages 20-29 in the Male Division was Yutaka Miyashita (00:31:42), in the Female Division was Yuko Watanabe (00:43:33) For ages 30-39 in the Male Division was Katsutoshi Sakuma (00:30:01) and in the Female Division was Makiko Morishita (00:43:32). And in the 40-49 age division for the Men's went to

TomiNishikido (00:29:55) and in the Female Division went to Ikue Takahashi (00:36:36). In the 50-59 age division went to Aiko Oshima (00:31:37). And for ages 60 and Up in the Men's Division went to Yasuhiro Kumikura (00:37:10)

“The flipper race was a success in that all winners finished safely and enjoyed themselves,” said MVA Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “However, the primary goal of the event is to attract visitors, so our post-race evaluation will be a careful cost-benefit analysis and exploration of options to grow the event in consideration of holding it again next year.”

The oldest competitor, 65-year-old Toshiyuki Nakajima, crossed the finish line in 1:05:01 to a round of encouraging applause by other swimmers. The two youngest swimmers, 8-year-olds Ryuto Yanai and Juhn Tenorio of the Northern Marianas, registered at 00:36:09 and 00:38:28, respectively.

The race, organized by the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA), requires swimmers to use wetsuits and fins. Snorkels and life jackets were also allowed. The race was followed by an island-style breakfast and awards ceremony. Competitors enjoyed free time on the island before departing late in the morning, just as the daily rush of visitors began to arrive.

Ai Shibata, a former Japanese Olympic gold medalist in the Athens 2004 Olympics, was on hand to encourage the swimmers.

The event is also sponsored by the Community Sports Center Foundation of Japan, Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament Executive Committees, local organizing committee, representatives from Japan and the CNMI and Japan Saipan Travel Association, HANMI, DFS, Diving Equipments Makers, Food Companies, Insurance Companies, CHC Saipan, Department of Public Safety (Boating Division) and the Coastal Resources Management (CRM), Japan Marine Recreation Association, Japan Recreational Diving Industry Association, Japan Scuba Association, Japan Wetsuits Manufacturers Association, University of Live Sport Education Society, Northern Mariana Diving Operators Association (NMDOA), Japan Sport Diving Association, Japan Snorkeling Association, the Japan Diving Federation, Meiji (VAAM), Mask (GULL), Tabata (TUSA), Moby Dick Restaurant, B-ism, Delta Air Lines, Marine Diving Magazine, SAS, Scuba Pro Asia, Japan Aqua Lung, Saipan World Resort, Country House Restaurant, Kanoa Resort (formerly Saipan Grand Hotel), Tasi Tours & Transportation, Inc.,

Hafadai Beach Hotel, Japan Saipan Travel Association (JSTA), DFS & the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation.



The award-winning aquamarine waters of Managaha in the Northern Mariana Islands welcomed 41 competitors in the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012.



Earlier swimmers applaud finishers in the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha.



8-year-old Juhn Tenorio, above, and Ryuto Yanai (not pictured) were the two youngest swimmers the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha.



Kensuke Kimura, left, and Eli Ebenezer Wong, right, exit the water together to share the 1st place finish in the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha. The pair finished the 1.5km swim in 00:25:01.



Eli Ebenezer Wong, left, and Kensuke Kimura, right, grant a media interview after jointly winning 1st place in the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha.



Japan Olympic golf medalist Ai Shibata is interviewed by media at the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha. Shibata attended to support the event.



Yumi Ishiodori of Japan is all smiles upon crossing the finish line of the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha. Ishiodori was the second woman to finish, after Angel Marie Tan of Saipan, and the fifth overall finisher.



A rainbow hangs over father and son Katsuyuki Arai and Chihaya Arai as they walk toward the finish line of the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, held at Managaha.



Medalists in the 4th Saipan International Open Water Flipper Tournament on June 23, 2012, take a commemorative photo after the awards ceremony and breakfast at Managaha following the race.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka in Japan by Delta Air Lines and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

###