



GRAND RAPIDS TRIATHLON



Dear Athletes,

As the situation surrounding COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to evolve, we are writing to provide an update on the 2020 Grand Rapids Triathlon. Please know that the health, safety, and well-being of you and the community at large is our highest priority and the guiding light behind every decision we make.

Tris4Health has been coordinating with USA Triathlon and closely monitoring critical developments in recent weeks, including a recommendation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to [cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more](#) throughout the United States. Governor Whitmer has also discussed extending her shelter in place order out to 70 days, which would extend into race week. **Given the large size of our event and the required close contact of the sport of triathlon, we have been forced to make the difficult decision to postpone the 10th anniversary edition of Grand Rapids Triathlon until June 13, 2021.** Unfortunately, moving the race to a later date in 2020 was not feasible. We hope that by postponing for a year we will give our community time to heal and our athletes time to concentrate on things such as family.

Industry estimates are that as many as 40-50% of endurance events are expected to no longer be in business next year. First and foremost, there will be a 2021 Grand Rapids Triathlon. As a small, family-owned business that puts on just a handful of events per year, Tris4Health relies on income from athlete registrations to host our events safely and effectively. We do not have a large corporation behind us that can help us weather this unexpected storm and get through these difficult times. Please understand that many of the costs involved with putting on a race are spent before the race is even held, including permit applications, signage and banner printing, venue rentals, event marketing and promotion, staff wages, ongoing storage, and many more costs. When we are forced to cancel an event for reasons outside of our control, we are unable to recoup the vast majority of these costs.

We realize that these are unexpected and difficult times and view the multi-sport community as part of our extended family. We've had many sleepless nights trying to come up with a set of options that will be fair to our athletes while at the same time ensuring we can put on next year's race. With that in mind we have come up with 3 options:

Option 1 - Virtual Event

We will be offering a virtual option complete with timing, medals, shirts, finisher pictures, etc. This new replacement event is “Grand Rapids VIRTUAL Triathlon 9.5”. We will be offering special medals and shirts rather than simply converting the existing designs into a virtual event.

2020 will not be considered our 10th anniversary! We will push that back to 2021 so we can all celebrate together, in person, the way it should be.

This will be the default option for athletes who are already registered, and a portion of their registration fee will benefit our primary charity partner, Make-a-Wish Michigan, along with Kids’ Food Basket. If you are already registered and want to enter the virtual event you do not need to do anything to change your registration.

Note: Anyone who is not already registered and would like to sign up for the virtual event can do so on our website. A portion of all proceeds will be donated to Make-a-Wish Michigan and Kids’ Food Basket

Option 2 - 100% Deferral to 2021

Under normal circumstances, our existing policy allows for a 50% credit towards next year’s race if an athlete chooses to defer at least 1 month prior to race day. We are waiving this policy and will offer FREE deferrals to next year’s event. Instructions on how to do so can be found on our website or by following the link provided at the bottom of this email.

Option 3 - Donate Registration Fee to Benefit Local Charities

If you are in the position that you can afford to do so, we would be grateful to any and all athletes who are able to donate their registration fee for 2020. This will be split evenly between Make-a-Wish Michigan and Kids’ Food Basket (after an administrative fee).

Canceling events is never an easy decision to make, and we know that this news is disappointing to all of you, just as it is disappointing to us. Our team began working on the 2020 race long before we had even put on the 2019 race. We have poured our hearts and souls, as well as thousands of hours, into this event. We are triathletes as well as race directors and understand the hours you have dedicated to training for this race, so please know that this cancellation was made with the safety of the entire community in mind, including Kent County’s most vulnerable populations. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding during this unprecedented time.

We have created a FAQ regarding the cancellation of this year's event that can be found on our website. This will be updated as we field questions from athletes. We ask that you PLEASE read this letter and the FAQ before reaching out to us directly as we expect to be inundated with questions. If you do need help, please be patient. We read every email, Facebook post, etc. and it may take time before we can get back to you. The best way to contact us is by emailing us at info@tris4health.com or by filling out the form on our website.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Tris4Health. Our local multi-sport community means the world to us, and we could not do this without our champions, athletes, sponsors, and volunteers.

Sincerely,
Jon and John
Race Directors, Grand Rapids Triathlon

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