

'Earl of Pearl' in Zell am See-Kaprun: on 26th July 2009 swimmers can take part in the fun race on Lake Zell

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Usually, victorious swimmers receive a medal or a trophy, laurels or a certificate. In Zell am See-Kaprun, however, they are vested with a noble title: on Sunday, 26th July 2009, the fun competition for everyone 'Earl of Pearl' is kicking off for the very first time in the very heart of the holiday destination in Pinzgau. The venue is azure blue Lake Zell where the water sports athletes will compete for victory from 11 am. The winners can look forward to wearing a sportive noble title by the end of the day.

The name of the contest may be slightly misleading: the participants of the 'Earl of Pearl' competition do not dive for pearls on the ground of Lake Zell. The only thing that matters for the participants of this event which is unique in Austria is the time they need to cover one of three different distances across the lake. Experienced swimmers and pros from the age of 18 start at 11 am on a 3.8-kilometre stretch while the middle distance of 1.5 kilometres is scheduled for 11.20 am when athletes from 15 years can prove their skills. The starting gun for beginners and athletes of all ages is fired at 11.10 am for their competition over 750 metres.

Especially for the permanently growing number of triathletes the 'Earl of Pearl' is a superb opportunity to prepare for the competitions of the summer season. But not only hobby swimmers from Austria and abroad are in for a special experience at this competition in Zell am See-Kaprun: so are the spectators. From the lakeside promenade, they can watch the spectacle live and close up since about 50 per cent of the stretches run directly along the shore. The starting point is the lido of Prielau. Athletes who opt for participating in the supreme discipline over 3.8 kilometres, will be heading towards the centre of the lake before turning back towards the goal on the northern shore of Lake Zell again. For water sports athletes who have their names put on the starters' list for the other two races, starting and finishing line are identical, too.

For selected VIPs, among them Snowboard World Cup winner Doris Günther, who do not want to content themselves with the view from the lakeside promenade, Zell am See-Kaprun and the organizer 'Sports Community Austria' have prepared an exclusive treat. They can choose to accompany the leading group of swimmers aboard the MS Schmittenhöhe. Further boats in close proximity of the athletes are steered by paramedics and doctors who guarantee for professional first-aid treatment in case of an emergency.

The best male and female starter on the 3.8-kilometre stretch will be vested with the much sought-after title of 'Earl' or 'Countess of Pearl'. The festive victory ceremony is scheduled for Sunday at 2 pm when the winners will receive an iron crown forged exclusively for the occasion by the metalworking shop Peter Köck from Zell am See. Jolly mood will already be spreading on Saturday evening at 7 pm when the welcoming party including a concert by the Beach Boys cover band 'Magy's Live' is kicking off.

Interested athletes can sign in for the competition until 20th July at www.earl-of-pearl.com. For further information on Zell am See-Kaprun please visit www.zellamsee-kaprun.com on the Internet.

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The holiday region of Zell am See-Kaprun with its 14,000 beds and two million overnight stays per year is one of the most important holiday destinations in Austria. The beautiful flora and fauna in the Alpine panorama and Lake Zell guarantee relaxation and well-being. Golfing, hiking, and bathing are at the focus for the summer time programme, but visitors can choose from more than 40 other activities as well. During the cold season, fun on skis and boards make sure that there is no dull moment. Skiers can comfortably reach the 138 kilometres of slopes covered with powder snow by one of the 54 lifts. Snowboarders enjoy the perfect conditions of the Snowpark on the 2,600-metre-high glacier plateau. Even in the summer you can swish down the slopes here. And family-friendliness is a top priority in Zell am See and Kaprun. For this reason, the region has already received various awards.

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