



BMW Motorsport

Long-distance triathlon: BMW works driver Alessandro Zanardi tackles the Hawaii challenge again.

Munich (DE), 6th October 2015. Last year he made an impressive Kona debut, this year he tackles the challenge again: Next Saturday, 10th October, BMW works driver and BMW Brand Ambassador Alessandro Zanardi (IT) will participate in the famous long-distance triathlon on Hawaii (US) for the second time. Zanardi will compete in this ultimate endurance test over a total distance of 226.255 kilometres solely with the power of his arms.

The triathlon consists of a 3.86 kilometre swim in the open ocean, a cycling section of 180.2 kilometres, which the Italian will complete with his handcycle, and a final running section over a full marathon distance of 42.195 kilometres. For this last part, the 48-year-old will use an Olympic wheel chair again.

On his debut last year, Zanardi completed the long-distance triathlon in a stunning time of 9:47:14 hours. He was 272nd overall of the 2,187 athletes to reach the finish. This year, he aims to do even better – as he now knows what to expect on Hawaii.

“It is completely different in comparison to last year. Back then I had the dream of setting a total time under the ten-hour-mark, but on the other hand I was very concerned because it was my first ever triathlon,” said Zanardi. “You have to consider it is not normal that someone makes his triathlon debut at Kona, because this is no less than the world championship finale with the world’s best athletes competing. For me the fact that I was able to do my first triathlon there was amazing. But, due to my total lack of experience, I was concerned last year about things that I had not done before, like changing from swimming to cycling and later to the wheel chair. I did not know if something could go wrong. This year, however, I know that these changes are quite simple for me. And I know that I can do them faster than last year – even if this only gains me a bunch of seconds, not of hours. The main reason why I think I can improve my time is the preparation I have done approaching this race: I have optimised it compared to last year.”

According to Zanardi, the weather conditions will be the main factor on Hawaii: “They can influence the overall performance far more than your preparation can. I believe last year we as athletes experienced really difficult weather conditions due to the strong wind. So if the wind will be a little bit more co-operative this year, then it should be quite easy to improve the time in the cycling section. If, on the other hand, it is wet for the marathon distance at the end, I could have a serious problem pushing my wheel chair, as my gloves would slide a lot on the rims. Overall I could sum up my expectations like this: If the conditions are similar to last year, I believe that I can improve my time due to my optimised preparation. If the conditions are worse, I would have to reconsider everything.”

The triathlon will start on Saturday, 10th October, at 6:55 a.m. local time in Kona.

Triathlon equipment - technical details.



Swimming wet vest:

Custom made for Zanardi from material which helps the body to float and keep it in the right position when moving in the water.

Handcycle:

Material: all structural parts are manufactured from carbon fibre

Weight: approx. 9 kg, depending on the type of wheels (lighter spoke wheels or heavier disc wheels for improved aerodynamics)

Wheels: three Campagnolo wheels – one front and two rear. All three wheels have a diameter of 26 inches.

Number of gears: 20

Top speed: approx. 60 km/h on the flat straight

Maximum revs of the cranks: up to 100 rpm in sprints

Zanardi developed his handcycle himself. He designed the key elements of the bike and tested and modified, for example, the shape and the position of the seat, the position of the cranks, as well as the position of the wheels. Based on this, he worked together with partner Dallara on optimising the weight and the aerodynamics. The carbon fibre parts are manufactured by Dallara.

Olympic wheelchair:

Material: main frame made of aluminium, seat made of carbon fibre. Zanardi uses a seat which he originally designed for his handcycle.

Weight: approx. 8 kg

Wheels: three Campagnolo wheels, diameter front wheel 20 inches, diameter rear wheels 28 inches.

The rear wheels feature special hand rims. The athlete gains momentum by swinging his arms and transfers this power to the wheels by pushing these rims with the palms of his hands during this movement. To avoid injuring the hands, special gloves need to be worn.

Top speed: top athletes reach 30 to 35 km/h on the flat straight.

Maximum number of pushes per minute: approx. 100

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