



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:
Julia Little
aussieangel@hawaii.rr.com
(808) 778-8048

Honolulu Ekiden is a 'Nod' to Ancient Japan Marathon-length Relay Race Combines

Fitness, Camaraderie, Friendly Competition, Teamwork and Music

HONOLULU – Dozens of teams will be lacing up their running shoes and donning their favorite superhero costumes to participate in the Fifth Annual Honolulu Ekiden and Music Festival, Sunday, May 21st.

This unique event, presented by the Honolulu Ekiden Foundation (HEF), combines a marathon-length relay race beginning at Queen Kapi'olani Park, and ending the festivities with a star-studded concert at Waikiki Shell.

Last year, 1,300 runners (some costumed) participated in the Honolulu Ekiden and made their way around O'ahu's picturesque South Shore, then back to the park. Participants in the relay are encouraged to register in two to six-member teams before May 18th. The registration fee includes participation in the race and admission to the nighttime music festival at the Waikiki Shell (tickets are first-come first-served for the first 2,000 participants).

The Honolulu Ekiden and Music Festival is the only one of its kind in Hawai'i, bringing Japan's Ekiden tradition of a marathon-length relay race to the islands. In ancient Japan, the Ekiden was a method of passing along important news from provinces to the capital with multiple messengers, completing different segments of the journey. Today, the event symbolizes teamwork and cooperation to achieve a common goal, with races held throughout Japan. The goal of the event is to promote tourism, foster cultural understanding between the residents of Hawai'i and Japan and provide a way for friends, co-workers, runners and members of the military to participate together in a race that not only promotes teamwork and competition, but most importantly, is a lot of fun!

“Ekiden races are very popular in Japan, where they bring people together for friendly competition. Our goal is to bring some of that goodwill to Hawai‘i and develop a stronger relationship between the people of Hawai‘i and Japan,” said HEF Secretary Jon Nakata. “For many, a full marathon might be too much of a challenge, but now, participants can form a team and complete the race with friends, family or co-workers.”

Event Details

Japanese entertainer Piko Taro will officially start the 26.2-mile race at Queen Kapi‘olani Park. It features six segments, with each member completing one or more legs of the race, then handing off a sash to be worn by the next runner. The Grand Prize of roundtrip airline tickets to Japan, will be awarded to each member of a six-member team. Other prizes will be awarded to the top finishers in 15 divisions, including youth, high school, university/college, corporate, heroes, family and kama‘aina. There’s also a contest for the best team costume. As with Ekiden races in Japan, local volunteers will encourage runners at the stations, adding to the fun and excitement of the event.

Immediately following the race from approximately 9 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. everyone is invited to unwind and recharge with an impressive entertainment festival. An exciting variety of Hawaiian and Japanese entertainment will be presented at the Kapi‘olani Bandstand, adjacent to the race finish line. The awards ceremony will start approximately at 10:30 a.m.

Concert festivities at the Waikiki Shell begin at 5 p.m. with the entrance gates opening at 4 p.m. The concert will run from 5 to 9:15 p.m. featuring Piko Taro, FLOW, the Gin Blossoms and Dirty Heads live! For more information visit www.hnlekiden.org or to purchase tickets for the concert only, visit www.ticketmaster.com, charge by phone at 1-800-745-3000 or visit the Blaisdell Box Office.

Race Details

Regular Registration (closes on May 18, 2017 at 11:59 p.m.)

2-person team \$120, \$60 per person.

3-person team \$180, \$60 per person.

4-person team \$240, \$60 per person.

5-person team \$285, \$57 per person.

6-person team \$300, \$50 per person.

Last Chance Registration (closes May 20, 2017)

2-person team \$140, \$70 per person.

3-person team \$210, \$70 per person.

4-person team \$280, \$70 per person.

5-person team \$335, \$67 per person.

6-person team \$360, \$60 per person.

*Payment may be made via credit card, personal check issued in the USA or money order.

The race course is divided into six sections. Relay teams can consist of two-to six-participants. The race will begin with the first member of the team at the start line wearing the team sash. There will be three relay stations to delineate each section of the race, where team members must transfer the sash to the person who will complete the next section. For teams with fewer than six members, each member may complete more than one section. However, multiple sections must be completed consecutively by the same person (i.e., runner #1 can complete sections 1 and 2, but not 1 and 3). Every sash contains an electronic chip that will register at each relay station. Teams must complete sections 1, 2, and 3 within three hours; thereafter, sections 4, 5, and 6 must each be completed within an hour. Thus, the maximum allowed duration to complete the entire course is six hours.

Honolulu Ekiden Schedule• 4:30 a.m. – Assemble at starting line

- 5 a.m. – Opening Ceremony• 5:30 a.m. – Race starts
- 9 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. - Bandstand entertainment
- 10:30 a.m. – Awards Ceremony begins

Concert Schedule

- 4 p.m. – Gates Open
- 5 p.m. – Concert begins
- 9:15 p.m. Concert ends

For more information, or to register please visit www.hnlekiden.org. Runners must pick up race-day information, packets and sashes for team entrants at the 2017 Honolulu Ekiden Expo, on May 20th at the Hawaii Convention Center, 3rd floor from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Late registration will be accepted on May 20, 2017 at the expo.

About Honolulu Ekiden Foundation

The Honolulu Ekiden Foundation was formed on January 3, 2013 to promote the advancement of peace and social welfare among people in the Pacific Rim, particularly Hawaii and Japan, through amateur sports and cultural activities. The Ekiden and concert will provide recreation, exercise, entertainment, cultural exchange, and an economic boost to the local community.

To register for the race, log onto: www.hnlekiden.org

For concert tickets, go to www.ticketmaster.com

For media information contact: Julia Little at aussieangel@hawaii.rr.com

###