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Easy Riders to Chalate

By Dean Geddes
I&M Staff Writer

Whether by land or by sea, sporting enthusiasts hungry for competition will have their plates full with three events scheduled for this weekend.

The trio of events kicks off on Saturday morning with the 19th annual Rock Run, a 50-mile relay race around the island that is not for the faint of heart. Teams of five compete in the grueling all-day event which begins on Saturday morning, with the first team usually finishing in around seven hours.

The Rock Run began as an individual competition, but in recent years organizers have not publicly encouraged individual participation because of liability issues, and instead focused on the relay teams. This year, however, marks the official return of individual racers to the event.

Last year it was Team Marine finishing in six hours and 38 minutes, with Team Lifeguard 37 minutes behind them in second place. Lauren Sposito, who has been a perennial individual runner in the event, was the first individual to finish the race last year in a time of 10 hours, 58 minutes.

About 10 people annually sign up for the individual race, and only about half finish the grueling 50-mile run, event organizer Hector MacDonald said, adding that sign-ups for teams and also for individuals looking to join a team are still open. To sign up, or for more information, call MacDonald at (704) 516-7206.

The first leg of the race starts along the North Shore of Coattue, and ends 12.5 miles down the beach at Great Point. The second leg is a 12-mile run heading south, from the point to Sconset. From there, the runners begin the third leg of the race, a seven-mile dash around Low Beach to Surfside. The fourth leg is an eight-mile run around the south shore to Madaket, and the fifth and final leg is a two-mile road run and an eight-mile beach run that culminates at the finish line, located at Jetties Beach.

For the athletes looking for a more leisurely competition, Sunday is your day with both the Ozone Surf Classic and the annual beach volleyball tournament being held on opposite shores.

The Ozone Surf Classic, in its sixth year, is held at Cisco Beach in memory of island surfing enthusiast David "Ozone" Ozias, who died in June 2001 at 30. The money raised benefits four island charities: The Boys & Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Nantucket, the Community Network for Children and the Park and Recreation Department's skateboard park.

Competition in the Surf Classic is divided into age, gender and board-length classes, and runs late into the afternoon. Last year, more than 120 surfers and 900 spectators helped raise over \$30,000 for the nonprofit event.

For more information about the Ozone Surf Classic or to volunteer, call Jane Stoddard at (508) 228-1699.



Photo by Nicole Harnishfeger
The 50-mile Rock Run is just one of three sporting events scheduled for this weekend on the island.



Over on the north shore, also starting on Sunday morning, is the 20th annual Nantucket Beach Volleyball Tournament. The event takes place at Jetties Beach and raises money for the Nantucket Food Pantry. The days events start at 10 a.m. and are highlighted by a round robin co-ed tournament. The activities aren't just for teams though, and single players are more than welcome to come down to the beach and participate, event organizer Linda Williams said, as some teams always find themselves short-handed.

Last year at the round robin co-ed volleyball tournament, The Sopranos defeated The Eagles in a hotly contested, best-of-three-set, championship match.

For more information about the volleyball tournament or to sign up, call Linda Williams at (508) 221-0432 or (508) 228-4556.

Reach Dean Geddes at sports@inkym.com