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Officials from Ironman North America, organizers of the Isuzu Ironman USA Lake Placid triathlon, have announced that wheelchair triathlete Randy Caddell will return to Lake Placid to compete in the 2001 event.

Caddell, who hails from Kaliua-Kona, Hawaii, has participated in both the 1999 and 2000 Isuzu Ironman USA Lake Placid triathlons, quickly becoming a fan favorite in the tiny Adirondack village.

Caddell has raced in Ironman events in South Africa, California, Germany, New Zealand and Lanzarote, as well as the Ironman World Championship held each October in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

The 33-year-old Caddell suffered a broken back in a motorcycle accident back in 1987. Alcohol was a factor in the accident, and Caddell uses his experience to speak to groups about not only the dangers of drinking and driving, but also to educate people about the world of the physically-challenged athlete. Among the area groups that Caddell has spoken to are the AuSable Forks Rotary Club, the High Peaks Kiwanis Club, Saranac Lake Youth Program and the Nazarene Church Youth Vacation Bible School.

"I met Randy last year after seeing him race two years ago," said Jay Ward, president of Ward Lumber located in Jay. "I was inspired by Randy's performance and his interest in giving back to the Ironman host communities. Randy's performance in the race as well as the positive and supportive response of fans and fellow athletes motivated me to become Randy's volunteer Business Manager in order to try to help Randy continue to compete in Ironman races around the world."

A resident of Kona, Hawaii (home to the Ironman World Championship) Caddell saw John Franks compete in 1996 (the first wheelchair athlete to complete the World Championship), and turned his own attention to the Ironman-distance, competing in the 1997 event.

"As a race grows, many athletes competing year after year in the same event, and develop a bond with the host community," said Isuzu Ironman USA Lake Placid Race Director Lyle Harris. "Randy's a perfect example of that. He's an inspiration for a lot of people here in the Lake Placid region."

Caddell's long-term goal is to host training camps for physically challenge athletes in Kona. The Whiteface Community United Methodist Church in Wilmington is raising funds for Randy to help defray the cost of airfare and other expenses. Tax- deductible donations can be sent to WCUMC at PO Box 26, Wilmington, NY 12997.

Volunteers are also needed to pick Randy up at the airport in Albany and bring him back as well as local transport during his weeklong stay. Volunteers can contact Jay Ward at Ward Lumber by calling (518) 946-2110 x141.

The third Isuzu Ironman USA Lake Placid triathlon will take place on July 29,2001.

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