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CAF to Raise Funds for Injured Military Personnel
at Ford Ironman California 70.3
Team Operation Rebound to be led by Six Wounded Veterans

San Diego, Calif. – Racers at the Ford Ironman California 70.3 triathlon on March 29, 2008 in Oceanside, Calif. are invited to join with the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) to raise funds to help military personnel permanently injured in Iraq and Afghanistan recover through the healing power of sports. By raising a minimum of \$1,000 each, triathletes already registered in the event can join *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3*, race side-by-side with heroes wounded defending our freedom, and enjoy a variety of other benefits – all while helping physically challenged military personnel “get back in the game.”

“Given that Camp Pendleton plays a critical role in the success of the Ford Ironman California 70.3, we believe this race is a natural for this concept, which was executed successfully last year at the Ford Ironman Florida 70.3,” said Virginia Tinley, CAF’s Executive Director. “More than \$190,000 was raised for injured veterans at the Florida event, and thanks to the great cooperation and support we’re receiving from North American Sports, we are hoping to enjoy similar success in Oceanside.”

Members of *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* will enjoy an unforgettable race experience. Aside from the opportunity to take on a grueling 70.3 triathlon alongside true American heroes, other benefits include:

- An official *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* uniform
- A special “Operation Rebound” early wave start
- A special team photo suitable for framing
- A special “Operation Rebound” racking zone in the transition area
- A inspirational pre-race luncheon on Friday before the race where *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* members can meet their wounded warrior teammates
- A CAF race belt and water bottle
- No waiting in line for registration (team packet pick-up at luncheon)
- Cool incentive prizes are available for those raising more than \$1,000

Wounded troops expected to race as part of *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* include Ret. Marine Sgt. Andy Hatcher (lost leg below the knee in second battle of Fallouja), Ret. Marine Cpl. Evan Morgan (lost both legs and sight in one eye as a result of an IED explosion in Iraq), Ret. Marine and world-class handcyclist Oscar Sanchez, and U.S. Army 1st Sgt. John Blue (lost leg below the knee in Iraq) and Spc. Saul Martinez (lost both legs in Iraq). Ret. Army National Guard E-5 Sgt. Brandon Erickson (lost arm above elbow in Iraq) will take on the challenge of the full course.

Signing up for *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* is easy (Sign up here: www.operationreboundcalifornia.kintera.org/teamorcali), and fundraising can be done simply online using CAF's Race for A Reason program. A one-time, nominal registration fee of \$25 gets you an official fundraising web page, an easy-to-follow fundraising kit, inspirational emails from your injured military teammates and a cool Operation Rebound technical training shirt. To join the team and qualify for all benefits, participants must raise a minimum of \$1,000 by March 14th.

Since the beginning of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, more than 27,000 U.S. military personnel have been wounded – many suffering traumatic, permanent injuries. In 2004, the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF), an organization with 15 years of experience supporting the athletic endeavors of physically challenged athletes, launched Operation Rebound. This program, which has touched hundreds of wounded veterans, provides the training, specialized equipment and mentoring that permanently injured military personnel need to get back into sports – whether their goal is to simply finish a local 5K or make it to the Paralympic games.

"This is a cause we all can truly get behind," said Tinley. "The funds raised at the Ford Ironman California 70.3 will help ensure U.S. military personnel who suffered permanent injuries fighting for our freedom get lifetime access to life-affirming, healing sports activities. By supporting Operation Rebound and our troops, you can really make this race matter."

You can sign up for *Team Operation Rebound California 70.3* by going to:
<http://www.operationreboundcalifornia.kintera.org/teamorcali>

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The Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) is a special place where courage has many faces ... where perseverance comes through the door with a first name ... where dreams are nourished and heroes have a home. It is an organization unlike any other in the world.

CAF grew out of a desire to assist one athlete paralyzed in a triathlon. From this modest beginning arose a more important mission – to make sure people with physical challenges have the same freedom to enjoy sports that the able-bodied take for granted.

Since 1994, CAF has raised more than \$16 million and satisfied almost 2,700 funding requests from challenged athletes in all 50 states and dozens of countries. Whether it's a \$2,000 grant for a handcycle, helping underwrite a \$15,000 running prosthetic or arranging enthusiastic encouragement from a mentor who has triumphed over a similar challenge, CAF's mission is clear: give those with the desire to live active, athletic lifestyles every opportunity to compete in the sports they love. To learn more, log on to www.challengedathletes.org or call 858-526-6556.