

**For Immediate Release**  
October 6, 2009

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**Rudy Garcia-Tolson Set to be the First Double Above-Knee Amputee to Compete  
At the Ford Ironman World Championship in Kona**

*San Diego, Calif.* – On Saturday, October 10, 21-year-old Rudy Garcia-Tolson of Bloomington, CA will attempt to become the first double above-knee amputee to compete in the Ford Ironman World Championship in Kona, Hawaii in his division. This historical feat is made even more significant as it will mark the first time a challenged athlete with his disability will race in the event on a standard upright bike and run on advanced Ossur Flex-Foot® running prosthetics made of energy storing carbon fiber technology.

The Ford Ironman World Championship is not for the faint of heart. Tens of thousands of triathletes attempt for years to qualify for the chance to see if they have what it takes. Rudy will be there with them, taking on the 2.4 mile ocean swim, 112 mile notoriously windy bike and a steamy 26.2 mile run as if he had two strong legs beneath him. But a challenge is what Rudy was born to overcome and this will not be the first time. As a spokesperson for the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) and member of Team Ossur, Rudy has always pushed perception... pushed limits of what the human body of any shape was meant to do.

Born with rare, multiple birth defects – a combination of crippling Pterygium Syndrome, a clubfoot, webbed fingers on both hands, and a cleft lip and plate, Rudy made the decision to have his legs amputated at the young age of five. Even as a kid trapped in an imperfect body, he was determined to overcome his physical challenges to be active and do what he wanted to do. Once he gained access to advanced prosthetics, he started swimming and running and began competing in triathlons. And by the age of eight, had declared that he was going to win a gold medal in swimming in the 2004 Paralympic Games.

He was true to his word and brought home the Gold in the 200 Meter Individual Medley in 2004 and 2008, while shattering the world record for his class. Rudy continues to swim as a member of the U.S. Paralympic Elite Team, but has shifted his focus to Ironman in pursuit of yet another seemingly impossible milestone from young man who as a child asked his legs to be removed so he could be free to go after dreams meant mostly for those with four functioning limbs.

“Who said you have to have legs to compete? All I’ve ever wanted to do was pursue my dreams and show people that you can do anything if you set your mind to it. Hopefully other kids with disabilities will see what I’ve accomplished and go after their dreams regardless of any perceived obstacles,” says Rudy. “I just want to prove to the world that no matter your challenge, whether it’s physical or mental, it can be overcome with a brave heart and determination.”

As with other athletes, technology plays a big part in helping an athlete reach their top form. Rudy is no exception. All told, he will have six prosthetic legs in tow for the big event – a pair for walking, a pair for biking and a pair for running. The advanced carbon fiber technology, silicone suspension, and lightweight alignment have been the catalyst that has always propelled Rudy to reach his goals. “We pride ourselves on being a company based on innovation that allows people like Rudy to push limits. It is people like him who make us work harder to make sure no person is limited by their dreams,” said Tabi King, spokesperson for Ossur.

As a member of Team Ossur for the last 12 years, Rudy has taken an active part in R & D providing input and making suggestions that he knows will make him a better athlete. His input at the age of 10 resulted in the development of the Flex-Run that would allow for above knee amputees to run long distances. This breakthrough has helped thousands of amputees pursue new opportunities. This technology has proven so valuable for kids and adults alike to become more active that Ossur partnered with the Challenged Athletes Foundation to provide running feet for those who could not afford one or is not covered by insurance. Rudy's infectious ambitions have inspired thousands around the world both able and challenged to overcome and persevere.

"Rudy represents everything the Challenged Athletes Foundation is about. Providing access and opportunity for those who have a goal and a dream, but are only limited by access to technology," said Virginia Tinley, executive director for CAF. "Rudy's example of inner strength and dedication has paved the way for a new generation of challenged athletes to dream big and we plan to be the vehicle that will help them reach those dreams," she added.

Now after nine months of fine tuning his legs with his prosthetist, Michael Davidson of Loma Linda University Medical Center training with his coaches, tweaking and testing his bike and prosthetics, Rudy is ready to defy the odds and inspire the physically challenged and able-bodied community. "I'm looking forward to starting the race" says Rudy. "The swim is my strongest part of the race and where I'll find my groove. The run is going to be the biggest challenge. I'll have to constantly monitor my stumps for swelling and slipping, as well as my nutrition and hydration."

Rudy hopes to finish the Ford Ironman World Championship not only for himself, but through his role as a spokesperson for CAF, make people aware that people with disabilities do not need to be held back by perceived limitations. His accomplishments as an athlete and a role model have been chronicled on the *Disney Channel*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and ABC's *Nightline* to name a few, which have allowed his peers to be educated about what is possible, find the help and support that is available to them through CAF, and learn about the Ossur prosthetic technology they need to get into the game.

The Ford Ironman World Championship is the next sounding block for Rudy to speak his message of hope and ability, to lead the way for future generations to follow and to change perceptions of what is possible.

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#### **Challenged Athletes Foundation**

*The Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) is a world leader in helping individuals with physical challenges get involved – and stay involved – in sports. CAF believes that participation in sports at any level increases self-esteem, encourages independence and enhances quality of life. Since 1994, more than \$21 million has been raised and almost 4,000 funding requests from challenged athletes in all 50 states and dozens of countries have been satisfied. Additionally, CAF's outreach efforts reach another 60,000 individuals each year. Whether it's a \$2,000 grant for a handcycle, helping underwrite a carbon fiber running foot not covered by insurance, 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](http://www.challengedathletes.org) or call 858-866-0959.*

#### **Ossur**

*Ossur (Nasdaq **OMX: OSSR**) is a global leader in non-invasive orthopaedics that help people live a life without limitations. Its business is focused on improving people's mobility through the delivery of innovative technologies within the fields of braces, supports, prosthetic limbs and compression therapy. A recognized "Technology Pioneer," Ossur invests significantly in research and product development; its award-winning designs ensuring a consistently strong position in the market. Successful patient and clinical outcomes are further empowered via Ossur's educational programs and business solutions. Headquartered in Iceland, Ossur has major operations in the Americas, Europe and Asia, with additional distributors worldwide. Website: [www.ossur.com](http://www.ossur.com)*