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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeafBlind Triathlete Sues Ironman

Lake Placid, New York – Kathleen Borrone, a DeafBlind triathlete, filed suit today against World Triathlon Corporation and USA Triathlon who own and operate iconic triathlons around the world including the Ironman Lake Placid. In 2015 and 2016, Borrone successfully completed the Ironman Lake Placid, which consists of a grueling 2.4 mile open water swim, followed by a 112 mile bike ride, and a 26.2 mile marathon. Although World Triathlon Corporation and USA Triathlon policies permit blind triathletes to compete with sighted guides, the triathlon operators have now prohibited Borrone from using her sighted guide because of his gender which violates the Americans with Disabilities Act and the New York Human Rights Law.

Fifty-two year old Borrone has competed in many triathlons. To help her navigate the course, Borrone uses a sighted guide for triathlons, including Ironman events. Borrone's sighted guide must not only be able to complete the triathlon, but must also be able to communicate with Borrone in tactile sign language which requires the DeafBlind person to place her hands on the hands of the other person who is signing. The DeafBlind person also relies on touch to understand the other person. Borrone has long trained and competed with sighted guide James Armstrong, but Ironman now refuses to allow her to compete with a sighted guide of a different gender. Borrone is not aware of any other sighted guide who is both able to meet the rigorous physical demands of the competition and communicate with her in tactile sign language. As a result, Ironman's policy excludes Borrone from participating in any of its future events.

The National Association of the Deaf wrote to Ironman twice asking them to modify the discriminatory policy, but received no response to either communication.

"I'm just asking for the opportunity to compete," said Borrone who has never allowed challenges to defeat her. "I've trained hard and I'm ready to prove myself."

"This country has long cheered those who train and compete in difficult sports, yet Ironman is denying a DeafBlind triathlete the opportunity to compete," said Howard A. Rosenblum, CEO of the National Association of the Deaf. "Kathleen Borrone is a role model for all of us, and no one should put false barriers in front of her or anyone else."

Borrone is represented by the National Association of the Deaf and Stein & Vargas, LLP.

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National Association of the Deaf is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by, and for, deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States.

Stein & Vargas, LLP is a civil rights firm based in Washington, D.C. and committed to the principle that all people have full and equal access to all parts of society.

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