With a slight breeze in the air, sun in the sky and water that looked like a mirror, the Dis-Chem Sun City Swim started off with a bang. Being widely regarded in the open water swimming community as arguably the safest and best organized swim on the summer calendar, the 2014 event was no exception.

With participants from all ages, it promised to be a good family day out. With the safety of the swimmers in the water, being of paramount importance, the organisers wanted to ensure that all those on land, swimmers and spectators, were also looked after with regards to sunblock. The Techniblock crew were thus hard at work spraying sunblock to ensure no one got burnt.

Along with major title sponsors Dis-Chem and Sun City, a number of other companies were recruited, the one requirement was that each enhance the event for the competitor

* Super Group transported the registration envelopes, provided t-shirts for registration helpers and prizes for every fun swimmer
* Speedo provided swimming caps, lucky draw prizes and the helpers with golf shirts
* Bené Water donated water for helpers and competitors
* Techniblock sprayed all spectators and swimmers with sun screen
* Voltaren ensured each competitor received a medal
* Garrun Group handed out 1 000 beach balls and a policy of free accident cover for the day
* PharmaChoice sponsored the Fun Swim and goody bag contents
* Biogen gave out Carbo-slush all day, added stress balls to goody bags and supplied tog bags with products to all age group winners

For many, the highlight of collecting their race packs is getting to see what was in their marvellous goodie bag. They certainly were not disappointed. The contents of the male and female goody bags were specific.

A big thank you needs to be given to all those that gave voluntary donations to the two charities in 2014. A total of R41 970 was donated to Little Eden and Kidney Beanz Trust. Little Eden and Kidney Beanz Trust both received their donations on the day with a large cheque handover of R24 441 and R17 529 respectively, which took place at 11:10 on the day of the swim.

For the serious competitor the 3km being a race between the top boys and girls for the first time. The lead group was men and women. Places 3, 4 and 5 overall went to women. For the men’s race Abdul Malick Railoun, Rueben Schoeman and Brandon Isemonger were in a bunch with 3 girls at halfway. At the end Reuben Schoeman finished 1st, Abdul Malick Railoun 2nd, with Brandon Isemonger finishing 3rd.

The women split the men’s 2nd and 3rd positions. The final result was, Carmen le Roux in 1st, followed by Clarice le Roux in 2nd and Michelle Weber in 3rd in Event 2, the Women 3km.

Up next were the 4 age group 1500m events, followed by the 1500m disabled event and then the PharmaChoice 600m Fun Swim.

The women’s 31-40yrs 1500m event was won by Kerry Groenewald, while Megan Albertyn and Carol Mason won the 41-50yrs and 51-60yrs category respectively. Maureen Mons defended her 61-70 yrs title with the new age category, 71&over being won by Beth Lordan. Samantha van Veryern took top honours for the Girls 13&under event.

In the Men’s 31-40 1500m, Michael Phillips was able to defend his title on the day, with Gary Albertyn taking gold in the 41-50yr event. Michael Semple and Terry Downes were the fastest on the day in their age groups also defending their titles in the 51-60yrs and 61-70yrs event, respectively. Derek Fyfe rounded off the event with finishing 1st in the 71&over category. The boys 13&under was won by Ruan Breytenbach, who finished 2nd overall in this 1500m event behind the 41-50yrs winner, Gary Albertyn. Michael Semple also took the Ross Lawson Trophy for being the first 51&over to finish.

The 14 – 30 1500m women’s events was hotly contested with the top 3 ladies in the 3km taking up the 1500m challenge as well. This time round, Michelle Weber was able to take top honours with Carmen le Roux and Clarice le Roux finishing 2ndand 3rd respectively. The same could be said in the men’s race with Reuben, Abdul and Brandon racing it out again. Reuben Schoeman was able to hold off his competitors again finishing 1st, with Abdul Malick Railoun 2nd and Neil Fair finishing 3rd.

With 41 swimmers starting the 1500m Disabled event there was some competition in each category. In the physically disabled event, Ashley Castelo Branco took the win for the men and Liz Bronkhorst took the win for the women. In the intellectually disabled event, Craig Groenewald won the men’s event, with Caitlin Ogden winning in the women’s event.

Along with these individual results, there are some team results. The High School with the most Girls’ finishing went to Pretoria Girl’s High, and Redhill took the prize for the High School with the most Boys’ finishing. Trinityhouse Preparatory took top honours for being the Fastest Primary School with Redhill rounding out the school teams by having the most swimmers overall finishing.

Not only do the schools get recognised, but the Swimming Clubs as well. This year, Coelacanths took the award for the most Master Club finishers as well as the Fastest Masters Club, while Aqua Athlete took the award for the Swimming Club with the most finishers in their event.

For many the 3km and 1500m is a bit too far, and that is what makes the PharmaChoice 600m Fun Swim the perfect event. Many swimmers, young and old ventured out to complete this untimed swim. With four waves being sent off, you could see the excitement building from those in the start area waiting to get onto the beach and into the water.

To add to all this excitement, Olympic gold Medallist, Cameron van der Burgh joined the last wave. To get all involved, swimmers are able to use any swimming equipment to complete the swim. Many came out with pool noodles; fins, arm bands and tubes, and all came across the finish line with a big smile on their face.

Every year we ask the public to nominate a swimmer for the Courage Award that gets handed out at Prize Giving. The Courage Award goes to a swimmer who has overcome an obstacle of some sort in the last year and is still at the event swimming. The 2014 Courage Award went to Brenda Noonan, who after losing her mother 4 weeks ago, decided to do the Fun Swim for her mother and is hoping to be able to complete the Midmar Mile in 2015.

All of these moments can be seen on the TV broadcasts on Super Sport’s, Super Swimmer with Episode 1 on Monday 3rd November 2014 and Episode 2 on Monday 10th November 2014. There will be repeats in the week following the broadcast of the 2 episodes.

In Motion Africa would like to thank Sun International and the Sun City Resort for all their help in the week leading up to the event. Some changes were required in order to accommodate the big screen and the live results. Without Sun International and the Sun City Resort being so effective and efficient the big screen and live results would not have been possible. Once again, a big thank you from the organiser’s side.

With the growth in numbers it is great to see that more people are getting involved in Open Water swimming and that more people are hearing about the Dis-Chem Sun City Swim. If the swim numbers continue to grow it will mean great things for not only this wonderful event, but also for open water swimming in general. The race organisers were extremely pleased with the success of the event on the day, for participants, sponsors and beneficiaries and are looking forward to the 2015 event to be held on Saturday the 24th October 2015.