Formentera's offices of sport and tourism have lent their support to Copa Marnaton, an open-water swimming fixture that returns to the island this season. Five years after it took over the island in October 2013, the Marnaton (a merger of the English “marathon” and the Catalan and Castilian words for "swimming" and "sea") will see participants compete locally in two different categories.

Raid Formentera

When the three-part event takes place Wednesday to Saturday (May 26), it will see contenders going solo or joining teams as they cover distances between 6.5 and 17 kilometres. Teams, for their part, will face a combination of swimming and kayak paddling.

Given the choice of challenges will be based on weather conditions, athletes won't know which circuits have been selected for competition until briefing day. The feature shared by the various options on the table is immense natural beauty and, in some cases, extreme difficulty. Participants must be prepared for a trial which extends over a distance of 17 kilometres.

Difficulty depends on the particular modality chosen by a contender at registration. If efforts are split evenly between partners on a team, each will swim and row equal parts. Swimmers opting to face the challenge solo must be prepared to take on the entire length of it, with a kayak trailing behind, too. A total of ten solo swimmers and twenty pairs are expected to take the challenge.

Marnaton

Next in the queue, and dovetailing with the final day of competition in the Raid, is the second Marnaton Formentera. The Marnaton is composed of two circuits, one four and another eleven kilometres in length, which see athletes departing from the western shore of Illetes beach and returning from the east.

Setting out at 10.00am, participants in the 4k circuit will go as far as es Pas before heading back towards Illetes. The first contenders in the 11k challenge will begin at 9.20am (departures

will take place place every ten minutes for 30 minutes thereafter) and circumscribe s'Espalmador island before making their way to the finish line. Roughly three hundred swimmers are expected to compete.

Formentera's spring of sport

Raid Formentera and the Marnaton are just two entries on a brimming sports calendar (the Ophiusa regatta, Far a Far footrace and Mitja Marató are others) that is aimed at showcasing Formentera as a low-season destination for travellers and fitness fans as well as promoting active lifestyles among islanders.