



Fate of Las Tres Islas in the Hands of the Canarian Politicians

PR0308

Major sporting events like Las Tres Islas and The Dash create tourist confidence in the regions in which they are held. When a potential tourist reads about these events in, for example, "The Lonely Planet Guide to the Canaries" or watches them on Eurosport it says "things are happening in the Canaries" - it inspires them and perhaps influences their choice of the Canaries as a future holiday destination or location to invest in a holiday home.

The reason these events receive as much coverage as they do is because they are exciting, original and they present the Canary Islands in the best possible light. The future growth of quality tourism will be partly related to the ability of the Canarian authorities to work with organizations providing aspirational events and the powerful and well-needed media coverage that accompanies them.

Using Lanzarote as an example, Cesar Manrique's accomplishments are well documented and part of his legacy is that there are 5 major tourist attractions where you can document the level of revenue generated by tourism. With major sporting events that is not so easy to do, but one way of gauging it is to put a price on the coverage (TV, web, radio and printed media) that the Canary Islands receive as a result. In the case of Las Tres Islas and The Dash this would run into millions of euros over the past 4 years.

The efforts of events company Youth's United (organizers of Las Tres Islas and The Dash) are beginning to pay off in Morocco. When Tila Braddock and his team held the first wind craft race across to Tarfaya in 2003 very few Europeans had heard of this area of Morocco, let alone visited it. In 2004 Tila presented a 5 year sports tourism development plan to the Moroccan Tourist Board and today Tarfaya has it's own windsurf and surf school (Surfaya) there is ferry across to Tarfaya from Fuerteventura (Puerto del Rosario in Fuerteventura has also become a Schengen border control point between Europe and Africa). Major companies are investing in massive areas of land around the town and harbour of Tarfaya and it would appear that the future for tourism there looks bright. Tila is now in the process of presenting a 5 year plan for sports events to be held in the area between Tarfaya and Layounne and linking them to the Canaries mainly through sailing events.

Tila says "We have proved ourselves and our events over the past 5 years and our relationship with the Moroccan authorities and major companies is getting stronger each year. When it comes to working with the Canarian authorities things are a little different, why are they not seizing this opportunity to market to a new and wider

audience - using our events - with both hands? Why are we not a priority and why is it so difficult to get into a meeting with the decision makers? We spend more time chasing for meetings than organizing the events! I know that it is election time and everyone is busy but supporting these high profile events is essential if the Canaries want to improve their image and fight for their share of the tourist market”

No events of this size and nature will survive without government level support and Tila is still waiting to hear if the Canarian authorities have allotted Las Tres Islas budget in 2008. He is keen to find out whether they see value in what has already been achieved and if they will work in closer co-operation with him over the next 5 years.

He states that without government funding he will have to cancel Las Tres Islas 2008 and then the decision will be either to focus on 2009 or leave it as a good memory alongside the feeling of a lost opportunity for the Canaries.

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