

GREENFIELD TRIATHLON



STAFF FILE PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Joellen Reino finishes the Sprint course the 2021 Greenfield Triathlon at the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area.

Same race, different look

No swim portion due to bacteria; extra run to open event

By **THOMAS JOHNSTON**
Staff Writer

The longest running triathlon in New England will look a bit different on Sunday.

The 38th Greenfield Triathlon gets underway on Sunday, but after a sample from the Green River revealed the water had tested positive for both *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*, the race was forced to take out the swim portion of the triathlon this year.

Instead, the event will begin with a one-third mile run around the transition area at the Green River Swim Area, heading out onto Nash's Mill

Road before looping around to go along the Green River and ending where the typical transition out of the water and onto the cycling portion takes place.

For points and ranking purposes, the race is still considered a full triathlon.

"We knew on Wednesday that we wouldn't have the swim portion so we were able to work to make sure it would still count as a full triathlon," race director Christy Moore said. "We're seeing mixed reviews on not having the swim. Those who excel in the swim portion are disappointed but those who struggle or aren't the best at the swim, there's a little relief."

Outside of the nixing of the swim portion, the rest of the race will remain the same. Those participating in the sprint course will follow up the lap around the transition area with a 15.14 mile bike ride and finish off the race with a 3.08 mile run. The international course is double the sprint course, with participants traversing 30.28 miles on the bike before closing with a 7.17 mile run.

The race will get going at 8 a.m., with the international course runners heading out first before the sprint course participants follow.

"The opening run should be just enough to spread them out

on the course," race committee member Rick Roy said. "We'll start in nine heats and those will be spaced out a couple minutes apart. We don't want 200 bikes hitting the road at the same time."

The race is still building back to where it was pre-pandemic. The Greenfield Triathlon has had 400 participants in the past, but as of Friday, 224 racers had signed up. With additional sign-ups on Saturday, that number may climb before the race gets underway.

That number is in line with how many participated last year.

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No race took place in 2020 due to COVID-19.

"Our numbers are still down from where they were in the past," Roy said. "We're not back to full speed just yet."

While numbers are still building back up, plenty of familiar faces will be competing on Sunday. South Deerfield's JoEllen Reino, who has been the women's winner in the sprint course seven times, will be seeking her eighth trophy this weekend.

The husband-wife duo of David Hansen and Jenny Hansen will be racing on Sunday, with the two winning the men's and women's international races in 2018. Roy is expecting another strong showing from the pair.

Jenny Hansen is a three-time winner in the international race.

"They should be the favorites going in," Roy said. "You never know who is going to show up and there's people who will compete who I'm not sure about, but I know they're really, really good."

Greenfield's Daniel Benson settled for second last year, with Agawam's Paul Mikuszewski taking the men's sprint, but the three-time champ will be back on Sunday looking to add a fourth sprint win to his record.

Two-time winner Win Whitcomb will be out racing while Charlie Bell, a mainstay of the race, made the trip up from North Carolina to participate.

Chris Ethier, who founded the Greenfield Triathlon, wasn't able to race last year but will be hitting the course on Sunday.

"It's wonderful to have him back," Roy said. "He does it most years. We're so happy to see he's doing it this year."

One person Roy is excited to



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

The start of a Sprint heat on the Green River in the 2021 Greenfield Triathlon.

have back on Sunday is Sean Moore. Moore was the winner of the first-ever Greenfield Triathlon in 1984, beating out the inaugural 24-person field.

Moore won't be participating in the race, instead opting to volunteer.

"We're really excited to have him back," Roy said. "I'm sure he'll see a lot of differences in the course from

when it first started to what it's like now."

The race brings in participants of all ages. The youngest participants will be just 11 years old while the oldest currently signed up is 82.

"We have people signed up from Arizona, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and from all over New England," Moore said. "It's great that people are willing to travel from all over to come compete in this race."

While hot weather is still expected on race day, the race committee has added plenty of ways for participants to stay cool throughout.

"We do have water bottle exchange and water stops along route," Moore said. "When it's

this hot, we have sponge pools which are just sponges filled with cold water that athletes can run with, put under hat and do whatever they need to stay cool."

For the second consecutive year, the Greenfield Triathlon will serve as a Massachusetts qualifier for the National Senior Games Triathlon. Anyone age 50 and older can qualify by finishing Sunday's race. Reno went down to Fort Lauderdale, Fla. last year to compete and was the winner on the women's side. The next National Senior Games Triathlon will be in Pittsburgh in 2023.

Those traveling through Greenfield on Sunday morning should be advised that Nash's Mill Road and Eunice Williams Drive will be closed during the race. Those driving in the area should drive with caution on roads surrounding the race. The race is still looking for volunteers for those interested.

After months of preparation, Moore said she's thrilled the race is here, and is looking forward to seeing all the athletes' work hard be rewarded.

"This is an event that brings such joy... it's great to see athletes who work so hard go out there and compete," Moore said. "They're so joyous and happy. It'll be humid, it'll be hot, but it's still so nice to see happy, healthy human being competing and having fun."

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CHRISTY MOORE

Greenfield Triathlon director