

# Greenfield Triathlon on tap Sunday

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Now in its fourth decade, the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon appears to be as strong as ever.

Race Director Christy Moore of the Greenfield Recreation Department said that 229 athletes have registered for the various age groups and divisions as of Wednesday night — including 123 for the individual Sprint course and 73 for the individual International course for the 31st-annual event, which takes place Sunday morning beginning at 8 a.m. at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area.

It looks like Greenfield's own Daniel Bensen will be prohibitive favorite to win the Overall Sprint Division. As of Wednesday, the 29-year-old Bensen — who captured the 2012 Sprint title and finished as run-

ner-up in 2013 — was the only one of the top three overall finishers last year to register.

Gregory Shea of Shelburne Falls announced after winning last year's competition that he intended to take a year off from triathlons after traveling to London in September. Third-place finisher Adam Hufnagel will return, but has opted to compete in International Overall Division, and fourth-place finisher Frank Kjaersgaard, who finished over 5 minutes behind Bensen, is also returning.

None of the top 10 men's finishers from the International race had registered as of Wednesday. Marcus Curran of Brownsville, Vt. (14th last year) is currently the highest returning finisher in the field, while Seth Hatch of Nantucket (16th) and Kyle See TRIATHLON Page B3



Recorder file photo/Trish Crapo

Swimmers vie for space in the Green River during the first leg of the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon held last year at the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area.

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Recorder file photo/Tish Crapo  
Daniel Benson sets off on the cycling leg of the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon last year. Benson, who finished second, is the top returning athlete in the Sprint competition.

## Triathlon: Bensen heads big field

From Page B1

Bissell of Amherst (19th) are also back.

Two of the top three Women's Sprint finishers are returning this year, but both have chosen to compete in the International Division. They are Meghan Skidmore from Intervale, N.H., and Tara Rasch from Northampton, who will be among the favorites in that field. That leaves the Sprint field wide open.

The event will kick off at 8 when the first three waves of International course participants enter the Green River waters, starting at the dam and heading Northwest up the river. They will start in two-minute intervals. The Sprint course athletes will begin at 8:30 and begin in three-minute intervals. According to Moore, the Green River passed the 72-hour water test it must undergo to make sure bacteria levels are at a healthy level for athletes. Mother nature could still cause a cancellation of the swimming portion of the event, but as of Friday night all three events will be a go.

The International course covers a total distance of 28.9 miles — competitors swim 6.3 miles, cycle 21.76 miles and finish by running 6.51 miles (roughly a quarter of a regulation marathon). The Sprint competition is just over half as long (13.25 miles) and traditionally includes a bigger overall field, necessitating more starting waves and longer starting intervals. That course will see athletes swim 3.1 miles, then cycle 14.87 miles and finish by running 3.07 miles.

Moore said she expects this to be the final year of competition on the altered course, which was altered by significant damage from Hurricane Irene in 2011 — most notably, it destroyed the historic covered bridge on Eunice Williams Drive.

On the makeshift route, bikers will ride up Nash's Mill Road to the intersection and take a left onto Leyden Road. They will continue on Leyden Road and turn right onto Barton Road, then take another onto Country Club Road. At the end of Country Club Road, they turn right onto Silver Street and return to Leyden Road. The International competitors will do three loops, while the Sprint competitors will complete two loops.

The final part of the competition, the run, will see athletes go the opposite way, running down Nash's Mill Road and up the small hill before turning right onto Colrain Road. They will bear right at Plain Road, then the International runners will continue all the way until the turn-around at

Eunice Williams Road and run back the same route. Sprint runners, meanwhile, will head up Plain Road, take a left onto Meadow Lane and head back to the finish line.

Race committee member Rick Roy, who has been involved with the Tri since its inception, acknowledged 2014 entrants Judith Roberts of Colrain, Joan LaPierre of Shelburne Falls and Cal Cameron of Port St. Lucie, Fla., for their dedication to the event, adding that they have all either competed in every or most every Tri since it began.

Moore said she expects about 300 competitors by the time they line up for the start on Sunday.

Registration will remain open through Saturday at 8

a.m., then a last-minute sign-up will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. during the packet pickup at the Swim & Rec Area pavilion.

The event is free of charge for spectators. However, those who park in the swimming area parking lot should plan to arrive early and remain for the duration of the event — cars will not be allowed to leave the lot until after the event (approximately noon). Spectators are encouraged to park at or near North Parish School and Valley Medical Group on Conway Street and walk to the swimming area.

Nash's Mill Road will be closed from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Motorists are asked to exercise extra caution when traveling on any roads utilized by the event that are not closed.