

Bensen, Cameron give Triathlon local champs

By JASON BUTYNSKI
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GREENFIELD — On July 23, Greenfield native Dan Bensen celebrated his marriage to college sweetheart Rachel Meyer with a wedding. Ten days later, he was again celebrating — this time, Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon's Sprint Division championship.

Bensen cruised through the 32nd running of the event to finish in 1 hour, 8 minutes, 1.5 seconds to beat the field by more than three minutes Sunday morning at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area.

Fitness

This marked the second Greenfield Triathlon victory for Bensen, who in 2012 also took home the hand-carved wooden trophy done by race volunteer Rick Roy. But there was one major difference between that first victory and Sunday's. Bensen's weakest event is the .31-mile swim, which was actually canceled back in 2012 due to high levels of Green River bacteria. That helped Bensen, a bike specialist who competed on the triathlon team at the University of Vermont prior to his 2008 graduation. The Burlington, Vt., university is also where Bensen met his future bride. The two now live on the campus of the Bement School, where Bensen teaches math and coaches the track & field team. Bensen said that winning the event this time was a bit more meaningful,



Recorder/Matt Burkhardt

Pete Letendre of Ludlow cycles down Nashs Mill Road and past the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area in Greenfield Sunday during the 32nd annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

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JoEllen Cameron
Women's Sprint winner

because the swim was included.

"I had a feeling (winning) was more promising that year because I give up a lot of time in the swim," he said. "I felt like I did reasonably well today. I felt like I could not swim a straight line. But I try to do well on the bike. And I like having the covered bridge in there. The uphill after the bridge can really break your rhythm if you don't know it's there, but you have such a long downhill afterwards, so you can really challenge yourself on it."

Northfield's Terry McKeon finished second overall behind Bensen in 1:11:02.8, while Seth Hatch, all the way from Nantucket, took third in 1:15:26.5.

The women's winner of the .31-mile swim, 15.14-mile bike and 3.09-mile run was Conway's JoEllen Cameron, who also celebrated her second Greenfield Triathlon victory, previously winning in 2011. Cameron, who competes in the women's 50-54 division, finished the course in 1:17:16.3, which was more than five minutes faster than her closest competition. Cameron competes in several triathlons per year but loves the Greenfield event. She was excited about the return of the covered bridge on Eunice Williams Drive, which had been washed out since 2011's Hurricane Irene storm, causing the past three races to an alternate course. Coincidentally, the last time Cameron won the Greenfield Triathlon was the last time the covered bridge-route was used.

"It's a fantastic course, and such a good time," she said. "The water temperature was perfect, and you couldn't ask for better weather. This is just the friendliest, nicest course I've run. The volunteers are all so nice, they are cheering for you the whole time. And I love that covered bridge."

Jacquelyn Pierce from Mansfield was second in the women's Sprint in 1:22:33.5, while Elizabeth Bianchi of West Chesterfield was third in 1:23:43.

The International Competition is twice the length of the Sprint, with a .63-mile swim, 30.28-mile bike and 7.19-mile run. Hatfield's Madeline Nagy celebrated her third career victory in Greenfield by finishing the grueling course in 2:39:12. Nagy said she has been participating in triathlons since 1989. Her previous Greenfield titles were in 2001 and 2013.

"I love this race," she said. "I'm glad it's back to the original course. It's the same course that I won it on the first time, which was way back."

Erin Smith from Salem, N.H., was second on the women's side in 2:40:29, while Ann Domigan from Reading was third in 2:48:40.

Northampton's Carson Poe was competing in his fourth Greenfield Triathlon, and after finishing second in 2013, he picked up his first



Recorder/Matt Burkhardt

Competitors in the 32nd annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon compete in the swimming leg of the grueling event at the Green River Swimming and Recreation Area on Nashs Mill Road Sunday in Greenfield.

title by pacing the men's International Division with a time of 2:23:47. He said that although he usually does a handful of triathlons annually, this was his first of 2015, because he has been saving himself for the Chattanooga Ironman, which takes place in late September.

"I think that's why I did really well today, because I'm rested, but I've been putting in a lot of work," Poe said.

Poe, who is originally from North Carolina, came to Massachusetts as a Boston University student and wound up in western Mass. after meeting his wife, a former Mt. Holyoke student. He was excited to win but even more

thrilled with the prize.

"The race director carves the wooden trophy, but gave the option of a cribbage board, and I love cribbage," Poe exclaimed. "It's the best prize ever."

There were four local women who finished in the top three in their respective age groups in the International competition. In the female 25-29 division, Northfield's Danielle Lacavalla came in first in 3:03:04, while South Deerfield's Rebekah Zimmerer was second in 3:31:15. In the female 45-49 division, Montague's Amy Bowse was second in 3:16:09, while in the female 50-54 division, Greenfield's Lauren Cunniffe won in 3:07:01.

On the men's side of the International competition, five local men placed in the top three in their age division. Shelburne Falls' Seth Hoynoski won the 15-19 division in 3:10:43, while Greenfield's Kyle Bissell took third in the men's 35-39 division in 2:54:50. Noah Stone from Orange was second in the men's 40-44 division in 2:52:56, and Greenfield's Keith Streeter was second in the men's 50-54 division in 3:01:05. Deerfield's Rich Clark was third in the men's 55-59 division in 3:03:32.

There were nine local women to place top three in their age division of the Sprint. Northfield's Emma Lindale was third in the 15-19 division in 1:47:08, while Sunderland's Aleks Kajstura was third in the female 30-34 division in 1:40:35. In the 40-44 division, Conway's Jessica Dacus was second in 1:30:56, while Greenfield's Danielle Costa was third in 1:34:52. Greenfield's Melinda Braughman won the 45-49 division in 1:43:26, while Montague's Amy Johnson was third in 1:58:10. Greenfield's Cathy Coutu won the women's 60-64 division in 1:42:02, while Colrain's Judith Roberts was third in 1:48:12. Joan Lapiere from Shelburne Falls won the women's 65-69 division in 1:34:50.

On the men's side of the Sprint, nine finished in the top three. See TRIATHLON Page B3



Recorder/Matt Burkhardt

Crystal Morey of Bellows Falls, Vt., runs down Plain Road in Greenfield Sunday during the 32nd annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

Triathlon: Nice day, local champs

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ished in the top three of their age division. Anderson brothers Noel (1:20:17) and Silas (1:43:59) from Ashfield took the top two places in the male 15-19 division. Greenfield's Paul Hake was second in the 30-34 division in 1:23:43, and Leverett's Chris Kusek was second in the men's 35-39 division in 1:23:29. Greenfield's Garth Shaneyfelt was tops in the men's 40-44 division in 1:16:58, and Gill's John Shearer was second in the men's 45-49 in 1:22:45. Greenfield's James Flynn took third in the 55-59 division in 1:25:36, and Greenfield's Chris Ethier, who organized the first Greenfield Tri, was second in the men's 65-69 division in 1:36:12. Bob Welsh from Shelburne Falls was the oldest competitor in the event and won the men's 70-plus division in 1:29:45.

The aforementioned Silas Anderson won the Patrick Bell Award, given to the youngest finisher in the Sprint Division. The award is named in memory of Greenfield native Bell, who began competing in triathlons in 1995 at age 13, his first being the Greenfield event. Bell went on to run many triathlons over the next 10 years before tragically passing away in 2005 at the age of 23 after completing the Ashland Lions Club Triathlon. Anderson's brother Noel won the award last summer. Silas also participated in the triathlon last summer but only did the swimming portion as part of a team. He said he decided he wanted to try the whole thing this summer as a 13-year-old.

"I just really wanted to do the whole thing because I saw Noel do it last year and I thought it would be fun," Silas said. "Just doing one part of



Recorder/Matt Burkhart

James Jarvis of Manchester, Conn., runs down Plain Road in Greenfield Sunday during the 32nd annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

the race was too little."

Husband-wife volunteers Dick and Ruth Henry were given the Robert "Nook" Burniske Award, given to a person who embodies the spirit of sportsmanship and has contributed to the Greenfield Triathlon or sports in Greenfield in a significant way. The award is in honor

of Burniske, who competed in the event before passing away in 1990. The Henrys have been volunteering at the Greenfield Triathlon for well over a decade and have been involved in many other volunteer endeavors in town, including helping out with the fireworks.