

36TH ANNUAL GREENFIELD LIGHTLIFE TRIATHLON

Different looking Tri on tap

Road construction leads to significant course changes

By **THOMAS JOHNSTON**
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The Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon kicks off Sunday, with this weekend's race marking the 36th running of the highly anticipated event.

As of Friday, 258 people had signed up for the race. In last year's event, 350 athletes competed. Competitors can continue to sign up at today's packet pickup, which runs from 4-6 p.m., though a 20-percent jump in fees will occur.

The water was expected to be tested today in preparation for the swim portion of the triathlon.

Due to the closing of Nash's Mill Road for bridge construction, the course was forced to undergo significant changes this year.

"We appreciate everyone's flexibility with our struggles in Greenfield," race director Christy Moore said.

The race consists of two heats: the international course and the sprint course. The international course consists of a .63 mile swim, 24.48 mile bike ride and 6.51 mile run. The sprint course contains a .31 mile swim, 12.49 mile bike ride and a 3.08 mile run.

JoEllen Reino has registered for this year's race, looking to defend her title in the women's sprint distance.

Since 2015, nobody has been able to finish ahead of Reino, with her time of 1 hour, 16 minutes and 21 seconds last year marking her best performance to date.

Reino's first sprint win came in 2011, and her five wins is a race record.

Northampton's Tara Strassburg, who has finished second to Reino the past two years, is registered and looking to dethrone the five-time champion.

The men's field should be wide open this year, as both men's winners from last year — David Hansen in the international distance and Robert Hollinger in the sprint — are yet to register for the race.

Hansen won the international course last year with a finish of 2:28:13 and Hollinger captured the sprint with a time of 1:04:30.

Conway's Jay Gump, the 2017 men's sprint winner, sustained an injury and is unable to com-

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STAFF FILE PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Lukas Martin, of Greenfield, transitions out of the swimming section while competing during the 2018 Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon. The event returns on Sunday.



STAFF FILE PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Competitors swim during the 2018 Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon. The event returns on Sunday.

Triathlon

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pete in this year's race. Gump has won both the international and sprint race.

Daniel Benson, the 2012, 2015 and 2016 sprint winner, has registered and is looking to regain his throne in the sprint race. Benson holds the record for the all-time best sprint finish with a time of 57:24.

Madeline Hansen, who ran away with the women's international with a time of 2:29:34, has yet to register for the race. Hatfield's Madeline Nagy, who took second a year ago with a time of 2:43:03, has registered and will look to once again be champion of the division, as she has won the international distance in 2017, 2015 and 2013.

The changes to the course have come with mixed reviews, but with the bridge repairs expected to be done in time for the 2020 race, this year's course should just be a one-time move.

"Some are excited because we don't have the switch back at Eunice Williams," Moore said. "Some of our athletes are happy they don't have that, some who have been coming for years are sad they don't have to bike or run up a hill."

While the course was forced to change, the mileage of the race was kept very similar to years' past.

The international course begins in the water, as swimmers will start on the beach in front of the foot bridge. From there, they will go through the 0.63-mile buoy-marked course and upon completion, will exit the water and run up the chute to the transition area.

The 0.31-mile sprint distance course will begin on the opposite end of the swim race chute.

After completion of the swim, all athletes will exit the transition area and mount their bikes in the mount zone, proceeding to ride onto Nash's Mill Road toward Colrain Road.

At the intersection, athletes will take a right onto Colrain Road, and when the



FILE PHOTO

Competitors swim through the water in a previous Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon. The event returns on Sunday.

road splits, stay right at the fork onto Plain Road. Riders will continue onto Green River Road until Eunice Williams Drive, where they will make a U-turn and go back down Green River Road. They will then continue right onto Green River Road at the intersection of Plain Road, and veer left onto Colrain Road.

Riders then turn around at Plain Road, with international racers completing this route four times and sprint course competitors completing it twice.

On the final loop, athletes will turn left onto Nash's Mill Road toward the transition area, where they will dismount their bikes before turning left into the transition area.

After the bike course comes the final running portion of the triathlon. For the international course, athletes will exit the transition area and turn right onto Nash's Mill Road, making another right onto Colrain Road at the intersection. At the fork in the road, they will veer right onto Plain Road and continue onto Green River Road until they hit Eunice Williams Drive, where they will make a U-Turn.

From there, runners will follow Green River Road back and continue right onto Green River Road at the intersection of Plain Road. They will then veer left onto Nash's Mill road toward the transition area, turning left into the first chute which bring them to the finish line.

The run for the sprint course has gone unchanged

from years past, as athletes will begin the same way, taking a right onto Nash's Mill Road and proceeding to bear right onto Colrain Road. At the fork, they will stay right to go onto Plain Road, and follow Plain Road until they hit Meadow Lane, which they will take a left onto. At the end of Meadow Lane, they will turn left onto Colrain Road. They will then turn left onto Nash's Mill Road heading toward the transition area, turning left into the first chute toward the finish line.

Access to Nash's Mill Road will only be available through Colrain Road, and Nash's Mill Road will be closed from 8 a.m. until noon.

Moore advised anyone driving in the area to try to avoid the roads the course runs on, especially with the bikers and runners being forced to make a U-turn.

"Anybody that can go either Eunice Williams and widen the route and widen the section, we appreciate," Moore said. "I know a lot of people live there and will have to plan for a longer period of time to get to their destination. We appreciate you being cautious and aware of the athletes on the course."

Spectator parking is available at the White Eagle Polish Picnic Grounds, which is approximately a one-mile walk to the transition area, while athletes may park at the Green River Swimming and Recreation area, but they will not be able to leave with their vehicles until noon. Parking will not be permitted along Colrain Road.