

# Skidmore dominant at Lightlife Triathlon

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GREENFIELD — It was not going to be easy for Meghan Skidmore to best her 2013 performance at the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon, but the North Conway, N.H., resident put on a show to remember during the 31st annual running of the event.

Skidmore not only won the women's overall International Competition, she also beat all the men in the event to claim her second consecutive title Sunday morning at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area.

## Fitness

Skidmore beat 71 other athletes in the International Competition, which consists of a .63-mile swim, 21.76-mile bike, and 6.51-mile run, finishing the course in a blistering 2 hours, 6 minutes, 36.2 seconds, nearly half a minute ahead of the next closest finisher.

"It was great," Skidmore said. "The course was awesome again, the awards afterwards, all the volunteers, I do a lot of races and this race is well-organized and so fun. It's the reason I drive 3 1/2 hours to come down and do it."

It is rare for a woman to win the entire event but Skidmore was a perfect candidate to pull off the feat. The 30-year-old was making her second appearance at the event, although first in the International field. Last summer, Skidmore made her debut in Greenfield by winning the women's Sprint Competition, finishing fifth overall. The Sprint course is a bit shorter, consisting of a .31-mile swim, 14.87-mile bike and 3.07-mile run. Skidmore actually went on to compete in the World Triathlon Championships last year in London, England, where she took 14th in the Sprint Competition in her age group and was the top American female in her age group.

She was back again this year in Greenfield and was running her 10th triathlon of the summer, and she and the other International competitors began hitting the water around 8 a.m. under cool, cloudy conditions. After the swim, athletes hopped on bikes for the middle portion of the event. At that point, light rain began to fall, making the roads slick, and causing multiple crashes. No competitors were seriously injured, but some scrapes and bruises were reported. Skidmore even saw someone in front of her wipe out and actually stopped to check on the person.

"It was a bummer that it rained today because there were a few crashes," she explained. "There was even a guy in front of me that wiped out and I was thankful that I didn't wipe out. He was OK. I stopped and made sure he was alright, but it got a little slick."

The rain did not last long, and by the time racers were finishing the run, the sun began to shine through as the humidity increased. Skidmore was followed by second-place finisher Keith McCormick, who was the men's overall champion with a time of 2:07:03.5. McCormick's finish was also unusual in that he was one of the oldest racers in the event at age 60. Of the 72 competitors, only 12 were older than McCormick, who according to information found on the Internet went to the 1976 Summer Olympics as an alternate United States pentathlete. McCormick is now a chiropractor in Amherst.

Skidmore crushed the rest of the women's



Volunteer Rick Roy (above, with megaphone) leads competitors into the swimming event during the 31st Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area on Sunday.

field, finishing nearly 14 minutes ahead of second-place finisher Ann Domigan of Reading, who came in 18th overall in 2:20:03, while Elizabeth Bianchi from West Chesterfield took third (23rd overall) in the women's field in 2:23:15.

The men's race was a bit closer, as second-place finisher Adam Hufnagel from Barnstable came in 30 seconds back of McCormick with a time of 2:07:34, while another Amherst resident Kevin Mephram, took third in 2:08:53. Hufnagel was another runner moving up a class after finishing second in the sprint division last season.

There was also a great story in the Sprint Competition as husband and wife Jennie and David Hansen from Rochester, N.Y., each won their respective divisions.

The David Hansen led the Sprint field by finishing first in a time of 1:06:31. Greenfield native Dan Bensen, who also finished second last year, came in second again this season with a time of 1:07:31 just two seconds ahead of Shelburne Falls native and third-place finisher Gregory Shea in 1:07:33. Jennie Hansen won the women's Sprint and came in fourth overall in 1:08:31. Conway's JoEllen Cameron came in second (12th overall) at 1:16:26, and Easthampton's Megan Bilodeau came in third (19th overall) in 1:19:11.

The Hansen couple first competed in the Greenfield Triathlon four years ago, stopping

in town as they made their way home after spending the week on Cape Cod. Jennie won the event that year, while David, who was just getting into triathlon, won his age group. The couple was married later that month and now, just shy of their fourth wedding anniversary, stopped in Greenfield again as they made their way home from Cape Cod.

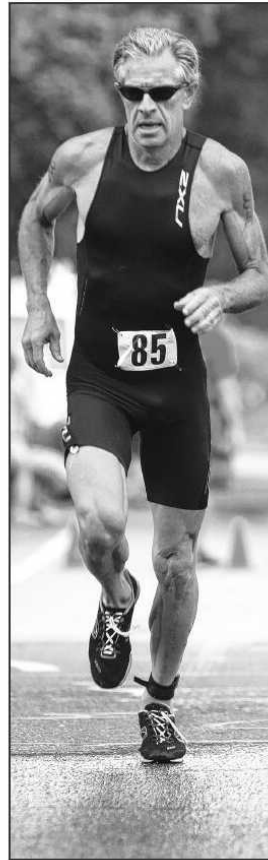
"We just happen to go to Cape Cod every year on this weekend and it just fit into my training schedule," Jennie said. "We decided we would come back again this year."

"I really missed the covered bridge, I can't wait for that to come back," David added, noting that when he and his wife were last at the course, it still included the covered bridge, which was destroyed by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. "That was so unique to this race, and I definitely can't wait to have that back."

There were 13 local men finishing in the top three of their age group in the Sprint Competition. Greenfield's Luke Toritto won the 15-19 division in 1:17:12, while Greenfield's Colen Stack took third in 1:21:53. Conway's Greg Shelley took third in the 20-24 division in 1:25:03, and Leyden's Paul Hake took second in the 30-34 in 1:17:07. Garth Shaneyfelt from Greenfield won the 40-44 division in 1:17:21, and Gill's John Shearer came in second in the division in 1:28:14. Northfield's Terry See TRIATHLON Page B3



Men's Sprint Division winner David Hansen from Rochester, N.Y., finishes the biking portion of the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon. Hansen and wife Jennie Hansen swept the men's and women's divisions. Recorder/Micky Bedell



Recorder/Micky Bedell

Left, Greenfield's Dan Bensen heads to the finish line during his second-place finish in the men's Sprint Division of Sunday's Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area in Greenfield. This marked the second consecutive runner-up for Bensen after he won the division in 2012. Right, Men's International Division winner and 60-year-old Amherst resident Keith McCormick runs toward the finish line.

## Triathlon: A busy Meadows morn

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McKeon came in second in the 45-49 division in 1:11:30, and Montague's Robert Bowse took third in the group in 1:18:03. South Deerfield's John Reino won the 50-54 division in 1:18:45, while in the 55-59 division, Greenfield residents James Flynn (1:26:47) and Garry Krinsky (1:27:08) took second and third. Race founder Chris Ethier from Shelburne Falls won the 65-69 division in 1:36:33, and Cal Cameron, who was competing in his final Greenfield Triathlon after starting in 1987, took second in the division in 1:45:56.

In women's Sprint results, six locals finished among the top three in their age group. Melinda Baughman from Greenfield was third in the 40-44 division in 1:51:07. Montague's Amy Schmidt Bowse won the 45-49 division in 1:33:01, and South Deerfield's Carrie Fydenkevez was second in 1:38:36. Greenfield's Cathy Coutu took second in 1:39:33 in the 55-59 division, and Mary Ellen Bricker from Greenfield came in third in 1:45:06. Colrain's Judith

Roberts won the 60-64 division in 1:40:00.

In the Clydesdale division, Greenfield's Ken Mullen took third in 1:36:26, while in the Athena Division, Greenfield's Karen Johnston took first in 1:39:11, and Greenfield's Maria Scotera took third in 1:47:29.

In the International Competition, five men finished among the top three in their age groups. Greenfield's David Raymond took third in the 25-29 division in 2:29:08, and Greenfield's Charles Leach took second in the 30-34 division in 2:18:46. Ashfield's Steve Nickoski took third in the 50-54 division in 2:33:59, Greenfield's Brian Wadman came in second in the 55-59 division in 2:21:24, and Greenfield's Frank McDonald took second in the 60-64 division in 2:28:16.

On the women's side, Greenfield's Lauren Cunniffe won the 50-54 division in 2:33:03 and was the only area female to finish among the top three in an age group.

The Patrick Bell Award, given to the youngest finisher in the Sprint Division, went to 15-year-old Noel Anderson from Ashfield. The award is given in honor of Greenfield

native Bell, who began competing in triathlons in 1995 at the age of 13 when he did his first Greenfield competition. Bell went on to run in numerous triathlons during his life before tragically passing away in 2005 at the age of 23 after completing the Ashland Lions Club Triathlon. Anderson said he began taking swimming lessons at the YMCA and was looking for competitive ways to swim.

"We are just too far away from any of the places that have swimming, so I was trying to find other ways to compete that have swimming in it," Anderson explained. "I've been biking a lot and swimming a lot — I swim about half a mile a day when I can — but I don't do a lot of running because it's not my favorite thing."

Triathlon volunteer Marsha Martin was 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.