

35TH ANNUAL GREENFIELD LIGHTLIFE TRIATHLON

Reino captures record 5th Greenfield Tri

By **JOSH SOLOMON**
Staff writer

GREENFIELD — In the weeks leading up to the 35th running of the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon, it seemed the weather was either hot and humid, rainy or both. On Sunday, the 355 race participants were spared torrential rains, but got served a harsh dose of hot and humid.

That's just what the doctor ordered, though, for perennial favorite, South Deerfield's JoEllen Reino, who grew up in Virginia. "It's such a short and sweet season up here," she said with her usual smile. "I'll take it."

Take it she did — Reino walked away from the sprint rendition of the triathlon with her fourth straight title and a new record, five total wins. She finished the feat in 1 hour, 16 minutes, 21 seconds. She broke a tie with Don Dwight, who finished first four times.

"I was happy with how I performed and then whatever the results were, it took care of itself," Reino said, after claiming her award to the cheers of the many familiar faces in the stands at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area. She beat out Northampton's Tara Strassburg (1:17:09) by 48 seconds.

"Certainly with this heat, I don't know where she gets her energy from," race director Christy Moore

said. "She's just fun to watch and I think she has fun competing, which is why I think she's so successful."

Reino spent most of her time talking about everyone else in the field, which can feel like a community event even though it attracts talent from across the state and a handful of participants from across the country, including cities like San Francisco and Brooklyn.

She mentioned she saw a lot of new faces this year in what was one of the biggest events in its history, something the founder of the triathlon Chris Ethier, also noted about the growth of the longest continuous triathlon in New England.

"It's like having children," said Ethier (1:38:38), who also owns Greenfield's Bicycle World and finished second in the 70-plus age category for the Sprint. "You want them to flourish. It's one thing I'm particularly proud of."

This year's competitors had varying views of how the course ran, although most saw the water in the Green River as cool, and on the back half choppy. By the time they made their transitions to the bike portion, it began to heat up Sunday morning, with the sun completely out for the third and final leg, the run.

The triathlon sports two races, the Sprint, which is composed of a 0.31-mile swim, a 15.14-mile bike and a 3.09-mile run, and the longer course, the International, which is



STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Steve O'Donnell leaves a trail of Green River water in his wake as he competes in the 35th annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon Sunday morning at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area in Greenfield. O'Donnell finished 18th overall in the International competition

made up of 0.63-mile swim, a 30.28-mile bike and a 7.09-mile run.

The top-three of the men's side of the Sprint were separated by about 36 seconds. The winner was Robert Hollinger of Newburyport, who finished in 1 hour, 4 minutes, 30 seconds. Amherst's Owen Wright (1:04:34) came in four seconds behind. Both of them ran the final leg's 5K with a sub 6-minute mile pace.

Reigning champ, Conway's Jay Gump came in third in the men's Sprint, despite outperforming the top-two finishers in the swim and bike. Gump completed the run in 19 minutes, 12 seconds, more than two minutes slower than Hollinger's time.

Greenfield's Dan Bensen, who was defeated by Gump last year after spending two years on top, fell to fifth.

"I would say this is probably the strongest field we've ever had," said Bensen (1:11:03). "The guys we had in the top three were ridiculous."

Bensen said the swim was tough, with a stiff current in the second half,

and a bit of a cooler water.

Although it's always a game-time decision of whether the swim portion will pass triathlon guidelines, since testing must be done 72 hours before the race, this year the choice came a little closer to the proverbial tip-off.

The day before the race, Moore announced they were officially good to go for the swim, after testing came back to indicate it was safe to swim and met national guidelines. Heavy rains this week had made it a little more of a challenge than usual to make sure the water was OK. She said they were working closely with Greenfield Department of Public Works to control the amount of water flowing in from the dam.

Nonetheless, Bensen said he had a good time as always.

"It's great to roll out of bed, hop on your bike and coast into the transition zone," said the University of Vermont graduate, who competed on the triathlon team at the school.

For the group of women who regularly rotate their place on the podium, everything went swimm-

ingly as usual.

Joan LaPierre (1:35:06), of Shelburne Falls, finished first in the Sprint category for women ages 65 to 69, followed by Greenfield's Margo Jones (1:45:15) and Colrain's Judith Roberts (1:51:30).

"It used to be that I could beat Joanie on the bike," Jones joked. "But no more."

"We have fun," LaPierre said. "As we get older, it's like a challenge of how much longer we can keep doing it."

Next year, Jones will be by herself in the 70-plus age category, while she awaits her friends to age-up with her — but in the meantime, "I'm really psyched to do it" by myself.

Roberts explained she always appreciates the way Moore and the Rec Department run the competition.

"This is our idea of fun," Roberts said with a smile as her fellow podium-toppers laughed along.

Having fun was the South Deerfield relay team that came in first

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STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Madge Szulga leads a group of cyclists during the second leg of the Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon Sunday morning.



Seth Hoynoski, of Shelburne Falls, front, finishes the last leg of the running section during the Greenfield Triathlon Sunday in Greenfield.

STAFF PHOTO/DAN LITTLE

Triathlon

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place in the Sprint, going from third place in their first year together two years ago to second place one year ago and now, gold.

Two Roses One Thorn, sporting tie-dye blue T-shirts on the sidelines, finished in one hour, 18 minutes, 36 seconds. Named after their team members, two of whom are women and one a man, Jennifer Yankowski led the family affair in the first leg.

"It's a fun Sunday," Yankowski said. "It gives us motivation to train over the course of the year."

Yankowski, who coaches the Amherst Tritons swim team for ages 6 to 18, said she had a friendly bet with some of the kids she teaches. One of them beat her in the swim this year, and while only by a few seconds, he made sure to let her know it in the spirit of good

sportsmanship, she said.

Upping Farm's Isaac Bingham finished 16th overall in the Sprint this year and third in his age bracket of 40 to 44. Bingham's farm was one of the sponsors of the race this year, which was a first for them, but he felt was a good match, since eating healthy goes hand in hand with exercise.

Bingham finished a minute slower this year, to which he said, "I think I'm going to blame it on milking the cows."

Similar to others out there Sunday, having young kids has made for an interesting challenge to the training regimen.

Bingham and his wife Sorrel Hatch have a 4-year-old, a 2-year-old and a two-month-old. He competes in the weekly Northfield Summer Road Race, while pushing his kids in a double-stroller; that's his run. His swim is either once a week at the YMCA, or in the Connecticut River. And

his bike ride, well, that's pulling the kids to the playground.

Well-known-runner-turned-recent-triathlete Ben Whitbeck, of Greenfield, spoke about his training while juggling his kids, too. He used to be someone who trained after he'd get home from work, but these days he's been squeezing it in while waking up at 4:30 a.m.

Whitbeck (2:41:27) came in eighth-overall in the International, while sporting the fastest time in the field in what is his specialty, the run, with a time of 46 minutes, 50 seconds for the 7.09 miles.

Winning the International was Rochester's David Hansen (2:28:13) followed by Alessio Orsini of Boston (2:29:08). Coming in third-place overall and first place for women was fellow Hansen, Jennie Hansen (2:29:34). She beat out four-time winner and reigning champion Madeline Nagy of Hatfield (2:43:04). Coming in fourth place overall

and third in men was Easthampton's Matthew Musiak (2:29:47).

Local top-3 finishers for Sprint include: In Athena, Catherine Smith of Greenfield (1:42:05) in second place; in Clydesdale, Lukas Martin of Greenfield (1:26:35) in first place; in female 20 to 24, Aimee Funk of Northfield (1:36:32) in third place; in female 35 to 39, Emma Theriault of Gill (1:29:37) in first place; in female 40 to 44, Melissa Warwick of Shutesbury (1:33:00) in first place; in female 55 to 59, Kim Callicoaate of Shutesbury (1:30:54) in second place; in female 60 to 64, Catherine Coutu of Greenfield (1:46:40) in third place; in female 65 to 69, Joan Lapiere of Shelburne Falls (1:35:06) in first place; Margo Jones of Greenfield (1:45:15) in second place; Judith Roberts of Colrain (1:51:30) in third place;

In male 14-and-under Luke Scotera of Greenfield (2:32:41); in male 30 to 34, Dan Bensen (1:11:03) in first place; in male 40 to 44, Isaac Bingham of Gill (1:17:51) in third place; in male 45 to 49, John Shearer of Gill (1:16:18) in third place; in male 50 to 54, Thomas Carmean of Gill (1:29:26) in third place; in male 60 to 64, Brian Wadman of Greenfield (1:23:03) in first place; in male 70-plus, Bob Welsh of Greenfield (1:35:55) in first place, Chris Ethier of Greenfield (1:38:39) in second place.

Local top-3 finishers in International include: In Athena, Eileen Naughton of Greenfield (4:51:52) in third place; in Clydesdale, Eric Wasileski of Shelburne Falls (4:24:58) in third place; in female 35 to 39, Heather Stinson (3:53:26) in third place; in female 50 to 54, Elizabeth Miller Pittman of Leverett (3:11:23) in second place, in male 20 to 24, Seth Montgomery of Gill (2:54:29) in first place, in male 40 to 44, Ben Whitbeck of Greenfield (2:41:27) in second place.

Taking home the Nook Burniske Award, given to a person who embodies the spirit and sportsmanship of the triathlon, was Colrain's Christa Snyder. Last year the Franklin Technical School teacher made a large quilt for

the triathlon, which was displayed hanging on the awards stage.

"I feel very blessed," she said. "I'm kind of stunned."

Snyder also competed in her fourth triathlon, coming from a start where she recalls she barely knew how to properly swim and still had much to learn about biking.

When she goes back to Tech, where she teaching baking, Snyder hopes to share her story with her students when they talk about what they did this summer.

"It's a good thing to let the kids know that everybody is capable of doing something like this," Snyder (2:17:02) said.

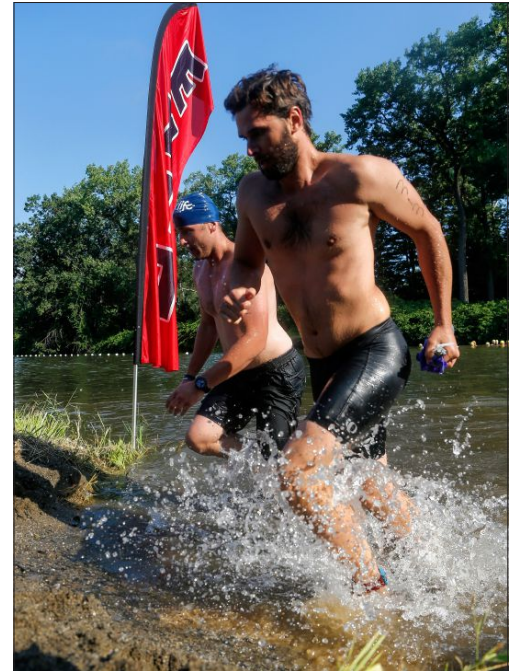
And for the third year in a row, the winner of the Patrick Bell Award went to Greenfield's Lucas Scotera. The award, established in 2005, is given to the youngest finisher each year in honor of Bell, who died suddenly at the age of 23 shortly after finishing a triathlon because of an undetected heart condition.

Lucas, 12, said after completing his third triathlon that it was "a lot harder than the first time." He said unabashed, "the swim was rushing, freezing and muddy." But, that made things easier afterward, he said, because the most difficult was behind him.

This year Lucas has stepped up his workouts to "intense training that leaves me breathless." His favorite part about it all is the "school-wide fame," he said. "It sets my year off to a good start."

Put aside whether Lucas is thinking about competing in the triathlon next year: He has his sights on more policy changes: Lucas wants the maximum age you can compete at of 120-years-old to be elevated to 130. That way, "I can do it longer," before admitting that then, it'd be a good time to retire.

You can reach Joshua Solomon at: jsolomon@recorder.com 413-772-0261, ext. 264



Lukas Martin, of Greenfield, transitions out of the swimming section while competing in the Greenfield Triathlon Sunday in Greenfield.

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