

34TH GREENFIELD LIGHTLIFE TRIATHLON

Reino wins third straight, fourth overall 'Tri'

By JASON BUTYNSKI
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — JoEllen Reino had to travel a bit further than the .31-mile swim, 15.14-mile bike and 3.09-mile run to make history Sunday morning during the 34th annual Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon at the Green River Swimming & Recreation Area. The South Deerfield resident also had a 3½-hour drive.

On Thursday, Reino decided that she would drive back to Franklin County during the middle of her Maine vacation to compete in the event and the three-time champ and two-time defending champion made history as she tied the record for most all-time wins with her fourth title. Reino won the women's Sprint competition by 1 hour, 18 minutes, 8.4

seconds to tie Don Dwight with four all-time wins as Dwight captured four consecutive men's International Division crowns from 1994 through 1997. The overall women's winner was competing in the 50-54 division.

Reino was not the only person who made history. She was joined in the record books by Hatfield's Madeline Nagy, who also picked up her fourth all-time victory with her women's International competition victory. Nagy finished the .63-mile swim, 30.28-mile bike and 7.19-mile run in 2 hours, 42 minutes, 56.5 seconds for her fourth-ever crown and first since 2015.

Reino was one of three, two-time defending champions competing on a picturesque Sunday morning. Greenfield's Dan Bensen looked to defend

his two-time crown in the men's Sprint, while Northampton's Carson Poe was back to defend his two-time title in the men's International. Bensen also had a chance to tie Dwight's record of four all-time wins but both he and Poe came up short in their endeavors on Sunday, as each man finished third in his respective race.

No woman had ever won three consecutive races prior to Reino's victory on Sunday. The former JoEllen Cameron, who married John Reino last August, was one of four women to win two straight Sprint Division titles, the most recent being Katie Monahan of Flagstaff, Ariz., who won in 2008 and 2009. Cameron was not even sure she was going to compete in this year's event due to an extended vacation but registered for the event on Thursday. She drove home on Saturday to compete on Sunday and was scheduled to drive back to Maine later Sunday afternoon to continue her vacation.

"I waited until Thursday to sign up because I wasn't sure if I was going to do it, but part of me wanted to try to win that fourth one," Reino said. "Even if I didn't win, I just wanted to do this. I just love the atmosphere. The whole event is just so lovely."

Reino was actually 15th in the 89-person women's field, after the swimming portion of the race with a time of 9:35, but she blazed on the bike, besting the rest of the women's field by well over a minute at 43:45 and her time of 22:41 in the run (fifth best among women) was enough to give her a nearly two-minute victory over Northampton's Tara Strassburg, who finished second in 1:19:51. Kathryn Flodquist of Terryville, Conn., finished third in 1:21:03.4.

"I'm pretty excited and really happy," Reino said. "I always enjoy this event. There are so many local people to cheer for and cheering you on."

Nagy also returned for her



RECORDER STAFF/ANDY CASTILLO

Cyclists compete in Sunday's Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

shot at history. The Hatfield resident previously won in 2001, 2013 and 2015. She missed last year's event due to an injury but has worked her way back this year as one of 24 women competing in the International field. She had already competed in other events earlier this season en route to Sunday's victory. Nagy was the top swimmer among the women with a time of 16:22 (over one minute faster than the next fastest swimmer), and was 5½ minutes faster than any other woman on the bike portion of the race with a time of 1:28:03. She was fifth fastest among runners with a time of 56:48, but her time was still nearly four minutes better than any other competitor.

"Last year I was injured. I had surgery in the fall, so it's been kind of a long road back, but I love this race and I'm psyched to be here this year," Nagy said. "It's an extra thrill to win, but I'm just happy to be here this year. Running is what I really had to be careful with, because that's what aggravates the injury if I do too much, but I did enough to hold on."

Bensen was attempting to become the third four-time champion on Sunday and also win his third consecutive Sprint title. The Greenfield native and Bement School teacher exited the swim portion of the event in 13th place (9:58), and despite having the second-fastest time on the bike

(38:22) and fifth-quickest run time (20:06), had to settle for third place overall with a final time of 1:10:39.2.

Conway's Jay Gump was competing in the event for the first time since he won it in 2007. Gump, an elite cyclist, said he decided to return to the event after suffering a back injury in October. Rehabbing that meant spending time in the pool and in order to motivate himself to swim — something he admitted that he doesn't really enjoy all that much — he decided to sign up for the triathlon.

For someone who doesn't love swimming, Gump showed



RECORDER STAFF/ANDY CASTILLO

Greenfield's Dan Bensen came up short in his bid for a third straight, and fourth overall title but took third overall in the men's Sprint Division in Sunday's Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

SPORTS



RECORDER STAFF/ANDY CASTILLO

Swimmers compete in Sunday's Greenfield Lightlife Triathlon.

Triathlon

FROM B1

well for himself, finishing second in the swim in 7:24, and then separating himself from the field with a blazing time of 35:59 in the bike, 2:23 quicker than Bensen who was second. Gump then turned in the third quickest time in the run to cruise to the men's Sprint title with a time of 1:04:52.1. Chris Lyons of Medford finished second in 1:08:32.4.

"I felt my swim was good and I was more interested in that than anything else," Gump said. "I think this is a fantastic event. I think a lot of people come because it's local and friendly. People come for fun first, and competitive next. A lot of other events are less beginner friendly. It's a nice neighborhood feel."

Northampton's Poe was another competitor who entered Sunday on a two-year winning streak. Poe was not at 100 percent entering the race. He flew back from Sri Lanka last weekend and was dealing with a cold from the long trip home.

That did not bode well as Eric Kirouac of Williamsburg, a 21-year-old who just finished his junior season at Queens University of Charlotte where he competes on the triathlon team. Kirouac was making his debut in the Greenfield Triathlon and made it a successful one, turning in a time of 2:18:33.3 to win by over three minutes ahead of Easthampton's Matthew Musiak. Kirouac was the second-quickest swimmer (1:26), top cyclist (1:17:40) and first in the run (44:30).

Musiak finished second in 2:21:28.3, while Poe was third in 2:29:18.3.

The field was also full of local people who placed among the top 3 in their age groups. In the women's Sprint, Aleks Kajstura of Sunderland won the ages 30-34 division in 1:34:08.3, while Karen Johnston (1:27:36.7) and Sarah Marchefka (1:37:27.7), both of Greenfield, finished first and second respectively in the women's 35-39 division. Cathy Coutu of Greenfield won the women's 60-64 division in 1:45:44.6. The women's 65-69 division saw Shelburne Falls' Joan Lapierre (1:35:03), Colrain's Judith Roberts (1:46:15.5) and Greenfield's Margo Jones (1:46:47.1) take the top three spots. Betsy Evans of Gill finished second in the female 70-plus division in 2:06:02.6. Greenfield's Sarah Prats was second in the Athena Division in 1:49:11.6.

On the men's Sprint side, Michael Currie of Greenfield finished second in the 30-34 division in 1:35:33.7. Isaac Bingham of Gill won the men's 35-39 in 1:16:20.6, while Ben Whitbeck (1:19:10.5) and Arne Christeusen (1:25:26.1), both of Greenfield, finished first and third in

the 40-44 division. Greenfield's Garth Shaneyfelt won the men's 45-49 division in 1:16:39.2, while Gill's John Shearer was second in 1:18:33.6. Greenfield's Keith Streeter took first in the men's 50-54 division in 1:29:14, while Greenfield's Brian Wadman (1:30:51.6) won the men's 55-59 division. Francis McDonald of Greenfield took second in the men's 65-69 division in 1:29:41.6, and Chris Ethier was third in the division in 1:37:37.9. Bob Welsh of Shelburne Falls won the men's 70-plus division in 1:35:20.3, while Whately's Pete Westover was second in 1:43:00. Greenfield's Lukas Martin took second in the Clydesdale Division in 1:27:56.9.

In the International women's field, Erving's Shelley Seymour won the 35-39 division in 3:36:55.7, while Greenfield's Heather Stinson took second in 3:38:34.8. Amy Bowse of Montague took second in the women's 45-49 division in 3:16:04.3, and Beth Miller Pittman of Leverett won the women's 50-54 division in 3:15:41.6.

In the International men's field, Gill's Seth Montgomery won the 20-24 division in 2:57:00. Greenfield's Luke Nugent (2:42:43) won the 30-34 division, while Greenfield's Aaron Stone was second in 2:49:19.9. Greenfield's Ben Kimball was third in the men's 45-49 division in 3:05:33.6, and Shelburne Falls' Eric Wasileski was second in the Clydesdale in 4:30:57.4.

Greenfield's Luke Scotera, an 11-year-old, won the Patrick Bell Award as the youngest finisher in the Sprint Division last summer and promised he would be back after the race. He made good on that promise on Sunday and was again the youngest competitor in the field, earning himself the honor for a second straight season.

Scotera finished the race in 2:45:53.7 and was all smiles as he stood on the podium with his trophy after being presented it by the family of Patrick Bell, a Greenfield native who ran his first triathlon at the age of 13. Bell passed away tragically in 2005 at the age of 23 after completing the Ashland Lions Club Triathlon and since that time his family has presented an award in his memory to the youngest finisher. This year marked the 13th year of that award. Scotera said he never wavered in his decision to return.

"I did it again because triathlons are awesome," the precocious athlete said.

The Greenfield Triathlon Committee also presented its Robert "Nook" Burniske Award to Claire Sagor, who was in charge of the volunteers for well over a decade. Sagor "retired" from the triathlon committee this season but still helped out as a volunteer.

"She is a huge supporter of this race," Greenfield Recreation Department director Christy Moore said.