

# Brazosport Relay Triathlon draws crowds

By Bill Shaw

## *The Facts*

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LAKE JACKSON — A Houston triathlete broke the individual female contest record, and a team of Rice University Owls' alums, the Hooters, finished first overall in the silver anniversary of the Brazosport Relay Triathlon with a vow to train harder next year and break the contest team record.

The Hooters, a co-ed team of three medical students and, in the words of runner Jerry Hopkins, a “slacker engineer,” finished the 1,000-meter swim, two 5K runs and a 15-mile cycle route in one hour, 28 minutes and 33 seconds — five minutes and 44 seconds faster than last year's overall winner, but 6:02 short of the overall contest record established in 1999.

The “slacker engineer,” Lauren Bailey, finished the 1,000-meter swim in the Recreation Center-Lake Jackson pool in 14:03.

“She dominated the swim,” Hopkins said. “She was so far ahead of everyone else in the pool, we really got a good start.”

Sarah Yoder finished the second leg of the relay, a 5K run out of the pool, around the recreation center and down along the Bottomlands Trail and back, in 19:27.

Yoder tagged Hopkins near Lake Road, and he finished the second 5K leg down to the



**The Hooters, Rice University Owls' alum team that finished first overall in the 2007 BRT, from left to right, Luke Gilman, cyclist; Lauren Bailey, swimmer, Sarah Yoder, first runner; and Jerry Hopkins, second runner. Photo furnished by team.**

Bottomlands Trail and back in 16:59.

Cyclist Luke Gilman finished the 15-mile anchor cycle route on Lake Road onto FM 2004 and back in 38:04.

The team's time earned them the first-place award in the mixed competition.

“We're out to break the record next year,” cyclist Gilman said. “We're going to get in better shape and break it.”

The veteran corporate team of Dow Chemical, Older but Wiser, finished the contest second overall and first in the male team competition in 1:32:29.

Swimmer Ronnie Paul

finished his leg in 13:20.

“Ronnie gave us a great start,” runner one Jerry Gipson said. “The great thing about this team is that it is consistent.”

“When Jerry made the exchange (in the pool), we were ahead of everyone else,” said Bob Bowden, the second runner. “My goal was just to make the bike exchange without anyone catching me, and I did.”

Gipson finished his run in 20:36; Bowden made his run to the bike exchange in 20:40.

Finishing 21st overall, Just For Fun from Tomball finished first in the overall female team competition in 1:52:01 with

swimmer Kelly McKinney (16:30), runners Regina Warren (29:14) and Allison Lemon (24:51) and cyclist Heather Bell (41:36).

Houstonian Matilda Guerra, 32, finished 25th in the pack of 53 teams, two individual female and six individual males in 1:53:34 to win first in the individual female competition and break the individual female contest record by 2:30. Guerra finished the swim in 19:01, the two 5K legs in 25:52 and 26:05, and the 15-mile cycle route in 42:36.

Finishing 20th overall in the pack, Emile Raschle finished first in the individual male competition in 1:50:44 with an 18:28 swim, 49:34 in the 5Ks and 42:42 on the bike. He was 16:51 off of the individual male competition established in 2004.

Michael Tarabay, 30, of Lake Jackson finished 24th overall and second in the individual male competition with a swim of 16:12, runs of 26:13 and 27:09 and a bike time of 43:59.

“I did the triathlon in Freeport last weekend, and I’m training for a half Ironman in Austin in October,” Tarabay said. “The hardest was the transition from the swimming to the bike, but other than that, I’m happy.”

Christian Samora, 35, of Angleton finished 37th overall and third in the male competition in 2:04:56 with a swim of 27:03, runs of 26:08 and 25:45 and a bike ride of 46:00.

Tiffany Whipple of Lake Jackson finished her “first

triathlon ever” 40th overall and second in the individual female competition in 2:09:14. Whipple finished the swim in 22:04, the two runs in 30:41 and 27:01 and the cycle route in 49:28.

The Brazosport triathlon offers not only a challenge for competitive individual and team triathletes, it also offers friends and family a challenge and a chance for the fun of finishing the distance. The top three teams in the male, female and mixed divisions based on the age of team members — 72 and younger, 73-160, 161-200, and 200 and older — receive awards. The top three male, female and mixed corporate teams also receive awards.

The youngest team in the competition, Splash, Dash, Pedal Fast from Lake Jackson finished 45th in the team competition and first in the female 72 and younger age bracket with a total team age of 47.

Veronica Maes, 14, a freshman at Brazoswood High School, finished the swim in 16:10. Runners Megan Kuettel, 11, and Johanna Madenjian, 11, finished their runs in 30:02 and 34:36 and cyclist Miranda Colegrave finished her bike ride in 1:02:36.

Pour Les Enfants (For the Children), the Coldirons of Wild Peach, Tracie and Brent, (mom and dad), and youngsters Shelby, 13, and Sam 15, finished 53rd overall in 2:43:35. Tracie finished the swim in 32:35, Shelby and Sam made their 5Ks in 43:29 and 28:16 and Brent finished the cycle ride in 59:15.

“Originally I was going to

do it with Sam and Shelby, but the swimmer dropped out, and I recruited Brent,” Tracie said. “I gave him a choice: He could swim or bike.”

The city of Lake Jackson, BASF and Brazosport Regional Health Services were major sponsors of the event. Other sponsors were Dow League Swimming, the Proposed “After 5 Rotary Club,” BEAR.COM, Coca Cola Enterprises, Mary Ruth Rhodenbaugh, Po-Boy’s Seafood Angleton, Killum Pest Control and Taylor Sport Chiropractic. The event benefits the Brazoria County Association for Citizens with Handicaps.

“We were privileged to be named the beneficiary,” said KC Strate, director of development for the BACH Rehabilitation Center. “We thought the event was well organized. The contestants and the volunteers were having a good time.”

“The experienced BRT Committee staff put together another great event for our community,” co-chair Mark Allen said. “We had a really good turnout and a good group of competitors, good people all around.”

Complete overall results and age group results are available at [www.brazosportrelaytriathlon.org](http://www.brazosportrelaytriathlon.org).