

More than 200 swim, run and bike in triathlon

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

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FREEPORT — Rain held off Sunday morning as more than 200 individual triathletes and teams met the challenge of the second annual Summertime Blues Triathlon — a 500-yard swim in Old River, a 15-mile cycle ride over the Intracoastal Waterway bridge to Quintana Park and back, and a 3-mile run around Old River.

Houstonian John Robertson, 33, completed the course in one hour, four minutes and 25 seconds, breaking the contest record by four minutes and 15 seconds. Robertson swam the 500 yards in 7:50; transitioned from the swim to the bike in 46 seconds, biked the 15 miles in 37:41 for an average speed of 23.9 mph; and finished the run in 17:24, a 5:48 mile pace.

“I felt a little sluggish in both the swim and the bike because I’m training for an Ironman next week,” Robertson said. “I felt good at the end of the race. I liked the course. It was nice having the bridge and finishing the run on a soft surface.”

Michael Wheatall of Katy finished the contest seventh overall, and first in the male masters (40 and older) competition in 1:09:21 and broke the male masters record by 2:28. Wheatall, 46, made the swim in 11:00 and transitioned to the bike in 41 seconds. He finished the 15-



The first wave of swimmers begin the 500-yard swim in the Old Brazos River. Photo by Bill Shaw.

mile bike ride in 38:21 at an average 23.5 mph, transitioned to the run in 31 seconds finished the run route in 18:46, a 6:15 pace.

“The swim (goal) for me is survival,” Wheatall said. “The bike and the run went well. It’s a good, fast course.”

Not to be upstaged by her husband, Suzanne Wheatall, 45, finished first in the overall female competition in 1:15:52, just two seconds short of the overall female record established last year.

Wheatall finished her swim in 10:53, and transitioned to the bike in 40 seconds. She finished the cycle route in 41:14 at an average speed of 21.9 mph and transitioned to the run in 37 seconds. She finished the run route in 22:28, a 7:29 race pace.

“I did OK; I just came off a long break,” Wheatall said. “I didn’t feel very strong. I was slow on the bike, and that’s my strength. I thought I should have

gone faster, but I couldn’t.”

Moving up from 57th overall and second in her age group last year, Elizabeth Hoffman, 48, of Houston finished seventh overall in the female competition and first in the female masters competition in 1:19:27, but fell 2:20 short of the female masters record.

Hoffman finished her swim in 10:56 and transitioned to the bike in 40 seconds. She finished the 15-mile cycle route in 44:21 at an average speed of 20.3 mph and transitioned to the run in 40 seconds. Hoffman finished the run in 22:48, a 7:36 pace.

“It was much better than last year,” Hoffman said. “The race conditions couldn’t have been better.”

Area athletes did well in the triathlon, with Susan Lorms of Lake Jackson finishing first in her 60-64 age group, the St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church all-



Houstonian John Robertson, 33, finished the Summertime Blues Triathlon in record time, 1:04:25 and won first place in the open male competition. Photo by Bill Shaw.

male team taking top honors in their competition, and city of Freeport employees and triathlon rookies stepping up to meet the race challenge.

Lorms, 60, finished the contest in 1:38:31. No swim time is available because Lorms lost her timing chip in the water, but she made the bike course in 53:46, an average speed of 16.7 mph, with a run transition of 1:19. She finished the run in 29:25, a 9:48 pace. She finished the contest 3:20 faster than she did last year.

The St. Timothy's team, Surf's Up, finished in 1:08:51. Swimmer Casey Miller finished his leg in 8:16; cyclist Dan

Connelly, 44, cycled in 39:31 for an average speed of 22.8 mph. Anchor leg runner Chris Connelly, 17, finished in 20:07, a 6:42 pace. Surf's Up beat last year's male team record by 28 seconds.

Freeport City Manager Ron Bottoms rallied his wife, Carmen, and his son, Heath, to finish the contest, and daughter Elizabeth served as "cheerleader."

"We did this as a team; our objective was just to finish," Bottoms said.

"This was very challenging, but I don't feel as bad at the end as I thought I would," Carmen Bottoms said. "We all trained for this with a schedule off the Internet called 'From the

Couch to the Finish Line.'"

"The swim was pretty hard because of all the people," Heath Bottoms, 15, said. "But I liked it (the triathlon) a lot."

"I'm proud of my wife, my son, Delia Munoz, our city secretary, and Gary Beverly, our city financial director. They all stepped up to the challenge," Bottoms said.

At press time, times for the Bottoms, Munoz and Beverly were unavailable.

"This is a great venue for a triathlon," Bottoms added. "We use RiverPlace and bring people into our town to see how beautiful Freeport is."

Sandra Barbree of B&B

Seafood treated triathletes, volunteers and triathlon supporters to breakfast following the triathlon in RiverPlace.

"The food was awesome," said Michael Wheatall, male masters winner.

B&B Seafood, Windswept, H.E.B., Talk about Good, Shipley's Donuts, On the River and Chiquita Bananas provided the food.

Participants praised the Freeport Police Department, the Freeport Parks and Streets employees and the contest volunteers.

"This has been the best supervised race I've ever seen," Lorms said.

"There wasn't one corner that wasn't covered by the police."

Second-year race director Mary Lee Stotler, also the Freeport Main Street director, thought the race was a success. "These people (triathletes) are so upbeat and so positive," Stotler said. "They appreciate everything we do for them, and we love doing it. We hope the triathlon gets better and better every year."

Tri On the Run sponsors and stages the contest. Main Street, the Freeport Lions, the Freeport League, Coady Lewis Insurance, the Law Office of Steve Gonzalez of Alvin, and the Law Office of Jed Silverman of Houston also sponsored and supported the event.

Results are available on www.runnertriathletenews.com.