

26th Annual Brazosport Relay Triathlon hosts record 81 teams

Local female triathlete breaks individual record

By Bill Shaw

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LAKE JACKSON—Under a cloudless sky on a perfect day the 26th annual Brazosport Relay Triathlon, Hooters, a Rice owl alum team, finished first overall and first in the mixed team competition for the second consecutive year, and Lake Jackson triathlete Abigail Artley finished first in the overall individual female competition in record-breaking time.

Four-member male, female, mixed (male and female) and corporate teams of swimmer, two runners and a cyclist participate in the team competition in a 1000 meter (1100 yards) swim in the Lake Jackson Recreation Center pool, two 5K (3.1 miles) runs around the recreation center and onto the Bottomlands Trail and back, and a 15-mile anchor cycle route out from the center and onto Hwy. 332 and back. Individual male and female competitors complete all four segments solo.

The Rice alums, three medical students and mechanical engineer, completed the four segments in one hour, 29 minutes and 38 seconds. Swimmer Lauren Bailey finished her swim in 14:04, one second slower than last year. Runners Sarah Yoder and Jerry Hopkins finished their 5K legs, respectively, in 18:49 and 17:57. Cyclist Luke Gilman rode the anchor leg in 38:48. Hooters finished 1:05

faster last year. Yoder had a faster run time, but Hopkins and Gilman were slower this year in their running and cycle legs.

“I went out too fast,” said Hopkins.

“The competition was tougher this year, and we all were a little nervous,” said Gilman.

Hooters won the overall award for the top mixed team. The team finished 7:07 short of the overall mixed team record and the overall contest record posted by the Brazosport Area/Houston mixed team “Winners Ahead Stay 15 Feet Back,” 1:22:31, in the 1999 context.

Sugar Land team Maximum Interlopers finished first in the male team competition in 1:33:06; however, according to team captain Chris Clark, the team had a last-minute, local replacement.

“One of our guys, the second runner, was sick on Friday, so we had to scramble,” said Clark. “We got in touch with the local running club and got a lot of names and sent out e-mails and got just one response. He (Kurt Pepper) was a good fast runner, but we lost about 40 seconds when he took a wrong turn.”

The Maximum Interloper swimmer Steve Long did his pool laps in 13:21; runners Doug Earl and Pepper made their runs in 22:29 and 19:01. Clark did the cycle segment in 38:15. The team fell 8:37 short of the 1:24:29 male team record posted by a Lake Jackson/

Angleton team, 21 & Under, in 2002.

Another Houston team, Dos Equis, finished first in the female team competition in 1:45:38 with swimmer Dia Waguespack (14:18), runners Sarah Krauss (24:14) and Cristina Wallace (21:49) and cyclist Stephanie Fofi (45:17). Like the Hooters team, three of the members are pre-med students; Krauss is a financial consultant.

“We are friends with the Rice alums,” said Wallace. “They encouraged us to compete in the contest. We thought it was a lot of fun, and we had a really good time.”

Dos Equis finished 13:55 short of the 1:32:03 female team record set by a Brazosport area/Houston team Fast and Furious in 2004.

Abigail Artley of Lake Jackson finished all four legs of the triathlon in 1:52:48 with a 22:53 swim, runs of 23:50 and 23:12, and a bike ride of 42:53 to break the individual female record posted last year by Houston triathlete Matilda Guerra by 46 seconds.

“I just did the bike leg last year, and my team won second in our age group,” said Artley. “It’s really different to run then to bike. I got a little claustrophobic in the pool because I am used to open-water swims, but my (two) lane mates were nice.”

Former Lake Jackson triathlete David Slingerland, 22, once held the individual male con-

test record until Bill Bender of Missouri City broke in 1:33:55 in 2004. This year, Slingerland finished first in the individual male competition but 5:07 short of Bender's record mark. Slingerland swam in 13:26, finished his runs in 22:45 and 22:09, and cycled in 40:42 for a total time of 1:39:02.

"The swim went well but a tiny bit slower than I wanted to go," said Slingerland. "When I hit the first mile marker (on the run), I knew I couldn't break the record. The weather was good, and all in all, I'm pretty happy."

Local triathletes Michael Tarabay of Lake Jackson and Troy Latiolais of Freeport finished second and third overall in the individual male competition, respectively, in 1:40:46 and 1:49:04.

"I improved on everything from last year," said Tarabay, who swam in 15:46, finished his runs in 23:43 and 24:41, and cycled in 36:36. "What's helped me get faster is training with faster people, but not so fast as to discourage me. I knew what to expect and knew I would be faster."

"This is my first year to do this triathlon, and I need to get my legs calibrated a little faster," said Latiolais, who finished the swim in 18:01, the runs in 24:58 and 24:02 and the bike in 42:03. "I liked running on the nature trail, but the bike ride was tougher on the way back because of the wind."

Encouraged by co-worker and friend Artley, Celia Castillo entered and finished her first triathlon

and placed second in the overall female competition in 2:49:58 with a swim of 37:22, runs of 32:04 and 32:44 and a bike ride of 1:07:48.



Abigail Artley broke the individual female BRT record.

"I did the relay last year and loved the challenge (of participating as an individual)," said Castillo. "I started off as a runner and did half marathons and the 2008 Houston Marathon and decided to challenge myself

more. Abbie is my running buddy. I am happy she can do this, and she is an inspiration (to me) for sure."

BASF team Who Has the Baton took top honors in the male corporate division in 1:33:58 with swimmer Greg Masica (15:37), runners Stanley Lo (19:26) and Mark Allen (19:10) and cyclist Sabino Gonzalez (39:45). Voodoo of Dow Chemical placed first in the female corporate division in 2:09:24 with swimmer Audrey Hooks (17:02), runners Napolina Chhetri (28:10) and Pamela Smith (32:12) and cyclist Riochelle Turner (52:00). Another BASF team, 50/50, finished first in the mixed corporate division in 1:59:27 with swimmer Robert Brem (20:54), runners Colleen Knight (29:26) and Pam Cayer (23:54) and cyclist Tony Whiddon (45:13). None of the corporate teams broke contest records.

In a special award new to the contest, BRT committee members chose the best team name. Dad Said This Would Be Fun, the Crosleys—swimmer Matt, runners Kyle and Nick, and cyclist John—won the award. Their team finished fourth in the male 73-160

age group in 1:57:19.

Teams turned out in record numbers since the contest moved to the recreation center venue in 1999, with 81 teams finishing the contest. The top three male, female and mixed teams in age groups based on the total age of team members—72 and under, 73-160, 161-200 and 201 and over—also received awards.

"I have no clue why we had so many teams," said BRT co-committee chair, John Farone, who has been involved with the event since its beginning. "I'm blaming the Olympics. The extra number of teams put a little strain on us, and we were not as well prepared as last year."

"I'm happy to be a part of another great event," said BRT co-chair Mark Allen. "I appreciate all the hard work by the committee members and all the volunteers. I hope for an even bigger crowd next year. The committee is already evaluating improvement options."

The contest benefits the Brazoria County Association for Citizens for Handicaps (BACH), and, according to Farone, the contest raised at least \$3,000 for the organization. This year's sponsors were the City of Lake Jackson, BASF, Brazosport Regional Health Care System, Mike Sittner, BEARCOM, Coco-Cola Enterprises, Brazosport Area Road Runners Association, State Representative Dennis Bonnen, The Proposed "After 5 Rotary Club," Constable Robin Rape—Precinct 1, Po-Boy's Seafood Angleton, Ward Chiropractic Center, and The Gym24.

Complete race results are available on www.brazosportrelaytriathlon.org.