

Triathlon creates lasting memories

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Deep cleaning my study/home office, I came across a multitude of old running photos I purchased or shot myself. An Aug. 30, 1986, photo brought back a specific memory from 23 years ago. I'm running in the fifth annual Brazosport Relay Triathlon. It was my first BRT when the contest began at the Clute Municipal Pool with the 1,000-meter swim and the one runner in the relay ran a 10K (6.2-miles) leg from the pool to the Dow Park on Highway 332, which now is a residential area. The cyclist made four laps around the lake.

The photo brought back memories because the BRT encouraged me in my running and training, and began lasting friendships with the local running community. Since that Aug. 30, 1986, run, I have not missed a BRT as a participant or a volunteer. For a number of years, I have served as a member of the planning committee.

The contest changed over the years. With the closure of the Dow Park, the cycle course had to be rerouted, and sometimes cy-

clists were delayed by the train at the intersection of College Boulevard and Old Angleton Road. Because of the late summer heat, the race committee split the 10K run segment into two 5Ks (3.1-miles) and added a fourth member to the team.

In 1999, The Recreation Center-Lake Jackson invited the contest to the new facility. Swimmers had an indoor pool, runners had shadier routes and cyclists had a straight 15-mile shot out and back on Highway 332 with no train crossing to delay them.

Traditionally, local teams make up the majority of participants — last year 45 of the 62 finishing teams. Out of the 10 corporate teams that finished, only one came from out of town, with Dow Chemical Co. fielding five teams, BASF two and Brazosport ISD two.

The BRT is a time for friends, families and coworkers to get together to have a good time, win or lose. The event is a great way to celebrate the end of summer. The event also encourages spirited competition by providing awards for the top three male, female and mixed (male and female) teams in four age-group brackets — 72 and younger, 73-160, 161-200 and 201 and over. Awards also go to the top overall teams in the male, female and mixed categories. The top three corporate teams in the male, female and mixed competition also take home awards.

Last year, 27 out of 62 teams took home awards; six of the nine corporate teams won awards. Some trophies were not awarded because the age groups lacked full participation. Only two females finished the contest individually and won awards; 11 individual males participated, and the top three took home awards.

Everyone took home a first-class T-shirt and good memories.

The 27th annual Brazosport Relay Triathlon begins at 6:45 a.m. Sept. 12, at the pool in The Recreation Center-Lake Jackson, so it's now time to get your team together. You need a swimmer who can splash through 1,100 yards, two runners who can romp the 5K segments and a cyclist who can pedal the 15-mile road route.

Registration forms are available at local physical fitness centers. Online registration also is available at active.com. Registrations must be postmarked by Aug. 29, and fees are \$60 for student relay teams (all participants 18 and younger), \$96 for other teams, \$30 for individual students and \$45 for other individuals. After Aug. 29, fees go up, respectively, to \$108, \$68, \$50 and \$35. All entries must be received by Sept. 9, for swim seeding. Teams can register late on packet pickup night, Sept. 11, but there will be no race-day registration.

Bill Shaw's running column appears every other Monday in *The Facts*.



