

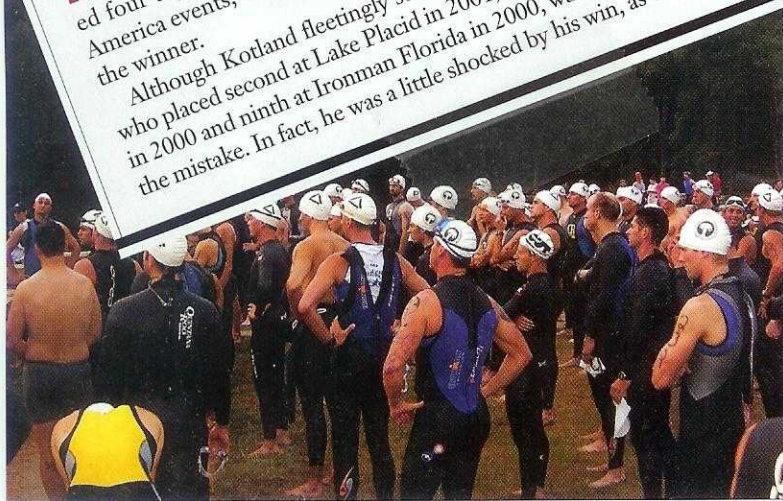
# South Carolina Half

Greenwood event is making a name for itself

By Rebecca Roozen

**CHARLOTTE'S JAMEY YON SHOOK THINGS UP A LITTLE WHEN HE BROKE THE TAPE IN 4:16:41 AT THE SOUTH CAROLINA HALF IN EARLY OCTOBER.** The announcer assumed Peter Kotland, who has posted four top-10 finishes in the past three years at Ironman North America events, would take the race and mistakenly proclaimed him the winner.

Although Kotland fleetingly stole his training partner's glory, Yon, who placed second at Lake Placid in 2001, sixth at Ironman California in 2000 and ninth at Ironman Florida in 2000, wasn't too disturbed by the mistake. In fact, he was a little shocked by his win, as well.



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"I was surprised, because Peter and I run together, and when I saw he was in front of me, I thought I would have to settle for second," said Yon.

Maybe the announcement mix-up and late start were part of a young event's growing pains. It was only the third year the small, Southern town of Greenwood hosted this big-league race. Besides, the town's scenic appeal and charming personalities easily proved this is a great race destination in the making.

## Ol' Southern charm

It seemed the whole town was there when I pulled up to Lake Greenwood State Park in my little red Neon rental at dawn. One of the Emily boys—their mother had enthusiastically entertained me with stories of her "Emily boys" the night before at dinner—flagged me in to a prime parking spot. As the community buzzed about, excitedly preparing for the first swim-start blow horn to sound, I soaked up a scene that reminded me of "Up North" Wisconsin: tall pines, crickets, a calm lake and unfortunately . . . mosquitoes.

Beyond the pestering insects, Greenwood, which is in the Piedmont region of South Carolina, is an accommodating venue: the calm lake—the water was 77 degrees the night before—greeted athletes for a one-loop swim, which is followed by a one-loop bike and two-loop run over rural, closed courses.

### SOUTH CAROLINA HALF IRONMAN Greenwood, S.C.

Oct. 2, 2005

1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run

#### WOMEN

1. Kimberly Grogan (Clermont, Fla.) 4:47:59
2. Katie Malone (Tryon, N.C.) 5:02:52
3. Kylie Kavanagh (Winston-Salem, N.C.) 5:14:34
4. Laura Dechamplain (Georgetown, S.C.) 5:21:35
5. Heather Smith (Rincon, Ga.) 5:22:49

#### MEN

1. Jamey Yon (Charlotte, N.C.) 4:16:41
2. Peter Kotland (Moore, S.C.) 4:20:55
3. Bryan Benitez-Nelson (Columbia, S.C.) 4:31:19
4. Andres Munera (Tampa, Fla.) 4:33:39
5. Fred Reinhardt (Hendersonville, N.C.) 4:35:03

I couldn't have had a better tour of the old cotton-mill town than I did riding over the 56-



## Start 'em young

Kids as young as five years old participated in the Greenwood kids triathlon the same weekend as the South Carolina Half.

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## Matus makes an impression

He was a head-turner. And I don't mean just the ladies were loving him; everyone was. It was hard not to notice that Matus Kriska didn't match up with the other triathletes. He's 12.

Kriska, from Mount Airy, N.C., is not your average active young man. His passion for sport goes beyond playing soccer, biking and skiing. So far, Kriska has completed seven triathlons: two sprints, three Olympic distances, an XTERRA and now the half in Greenwood (he finished in 6:21).

When he was 11, Kriska completed an Olympic-distance race in 2:49 and a sprint in 1:25. And he says this is just the beginning because he plans on completing an Ironman by the time he's 16.

Keep an eye out for Kriska.

of the pack. And there was something about Rodney's choice of Sunday morning gospel radio humming in my helmet headset and the rays squeezing through the vine-entwined oaks that brought small-town Greenwood to life.

We passed swamps, farms and churches as we buzzed through neighboring Saluda and Ninety-Six. Trees swathed in ivy hovered over fruit stands, streams and signs boasting "Fresh Boiled Peanuts." Hawks glided over bales of hay, and we cruised back into the transition zone just behind the race leaders, ending my introduction to Sunday mornings in the South.

The pace is slower and the air a little muggy, but I was pleasantly surprised by Greenwood and know what its Senator Drummond spoke of as he launched the race morning into action with these words, "I just

mile bike course on the back of Rodney's (one of the local race volunteers) motorcycle. As the sun beamed down on my driver—and tour