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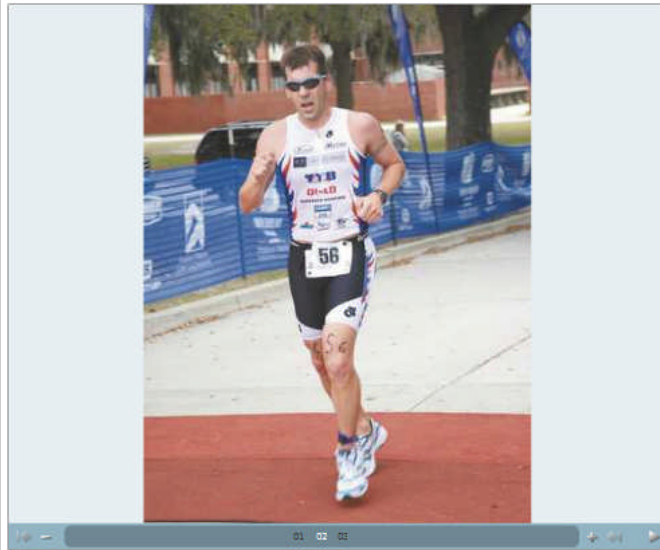
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The ultimate workout

Parris Island Triathlon draws over 500 competitors



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While pedaling his bike through the course at Saturday's Parris Island Triathlon, Daniel Moss thought the biggest obstacles were behind him.

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None of the 518 other racers appeared to be within striking distance and Moss' four years of competitive experience made fatigue a non-issue. Plus, biking was his favorite portion of the three-part event, so what could go wrong?

Suddenly, he was reminded of the race's setting -- the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island.

Just ahead, a Marine platoon marched with precision across the course path, bringing Moss to a screeching halt and forcing him to crack a smile.

"That was a new one for me," the Simpsonville resident said. "I almost missed my turn because I saw them coming and knew I couldn't break it up. I had to wait about 15 seconds, so I just fixed my gear and then got going when they passed."

The extra downtime did little to slow Moss, who claimed first with a time of 52 minutes, 56 seconds to claim first overall and in the men's open division.

Sonni Dyer's pace of 53:44 was good enough for second while Bryan Benitez Nelson took third with a time of 55:40 in the South

Carolina Triathlon Series event.

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The sprint course of a 500-meter swim, 13-mile bike ride and 5K run proved little match for neither this threesome nor Kristel Maes (1:01:39), Gabrielle Hauck (1:03:25) and Thea Kent (1:03:32), who finished 1-2-3 in the women's open category.

But even though these six went home with the biggest hardware, the sport itself also was rewarded by the testament to endurance made by its participants.

There was 10-year-old Evans Harrison from Greer, methodically striding alongside his dad, John, while those lining the streets pushed him on with words of encouragement.

Never before had Evans biked more than seven miles, but after his first sprint triathlon, he's already looking forward to his 13th birthday, when he can join his dad for the ironman event.

"The run was the hardest because my legs were tired from the bike part. But I liked riding on my new bike," said Evans, who finished with a time of 1:35:42.

About 45 minutes later, there was 78-year-old Paul Webster making his way around the course's final turn before securing a time of 1:56:15.

Four years ago, the Augusta, Ga., resident decided to funnel his 29 combined years of military and college athletic experience into triathlons. The result was an inspiring example of endurance.

"It's crazy to watch him do these things," Webster's 20-year-old grandson and fellow competitor, J.P., said. "I decided on his 77th birthday that I'm going to start doing triathlons so I can be in that kind of shape when I'm older."

Likewise, almost every triathlete crossed the finish line with a broad smile and arms raised in fulfillment, seemingly channeling the magnitude of the just-completed course into a justified sense of pride.

And while the next few days likely will bring achy joints and painful limbs, there's a reason why the field at this annual competition continues to swell.

"At this age, it takes a couple weeks to recover," said 71-year-old participant Mike Dayoub. "But I'll be doing triathlons for as long as I can. Where else can I hang out with people who aren't all my age and love doing what I do?"

Top five: Daniel Moss 52:56, Sonni Dyer 53:44, Bryan Benitez-Nelson 55:40, Jamie Church 55:44, Mark Woody 56:08

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