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Triathlon attracts elite athletes

PATRICK ZARCONE • PUBLISHED JULY 31, 2008 12:15 AM

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CANTON – After racing in triathlons across the country, Kevin Lisska is back home and ready to defend his title.

The third annual Lake Logan Triathlon, an Olympic-distance event, will take place Saturday. The race includes a 1,500-meter swim, 40-kilometer (24.8-mile) bike ride and a 10K (6.2-mile) run.

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In his first appearance in this race last year, Lisska won with a time of 1:54:25.

Alicia Parr won the women's category in 2:08:56.

"Obviously, I'm looking just to win and improve my time from last year," said Lisska, 28, of Mills River.

"I've done probably five or six (triathlons), and I've done them all over," he said. "This is a local race for me."

Lisska has competed in triathlons in California, Florida, Tennessee and West Virginia this year. He also took part in June's Enka Triathlon at Biltmore Lake, which is a sprint triathlon that features shorter lengths in each part. He won with

a time of 1:17:58.

Location, location, location

Lake Logan's location is one of the top reasons the triathlon is so popular and why it continues to grow.

"It's a beautiful course; it's stunning," said race director Greg Duff, 46.

"The lake itself is gorgeous, the bike course is scenic in a lot of different ways, and the running course is right along the river," he said. "It's a very pretty course, and I think that's one of the things that attract people to it."

"It's a great lake. ... It's private, and the water's clean. It's not for public use, so there's no pollution in it."

As word spreads about the beauty and the relative ease of the course, the number of participants continues to rise. In the first year of the race, there were 167 participants. Last year, there were more than 360, and this year, more than 475 are registered, with a limit of 600 in place.

Love at Lake Logan

Aside from Lisska trying to defend his title, there's another interesting story line at the triathlon.

Renee Barefoot, 25, is a teacher at Enka Middle School, and Kyle Moody, 28, is an engineer. They met two years ago at the Biltmore Lake Triathlon and married.

They will be competing against each other on Saturday in their first Lake Logan Triathlon.

Barefoot and Moody don't plan to let love get in the way.



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Steve Dixon/sdixon@citizen-times.com
Renee Barefoot and Kyle Moody run on the Mountains-to-Sea trail Tuesday as they train for the Lake Logan Triathlon, an Olympic-distance event scheduled for Saturday. - Steve Dixon/sdixon@citizen-times.com

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IF YOU GO

What: Lake Logan Triathlon, an Olympic-distance triathlon that features a 1,500-meter swim, 40-kilometer (24.8-mile) bike and 10K (6.2-mile) run.

Where: Lake Logan Episcopal Center, Canton.

When: 7 a.m. Saturday.

Entry fee: Friday during packet pickup or Saturday morning before the race. \$83 per person, \$130 for relay team, \$10 charge for non-USA Triathlon members.

Directions: From Asheville, take Interstate 40 west to Exit 37, East Canton; turn left at the bottom of the ramp. Turn right on U.S. 19/23 into Canton, left on N.C. 110 South (Sorrells Street). Go six miles on N.C. 110, cross over to U.S. 276, going straight where the road becomes N.C. 215 (Lovejoy Road). After about 2 1/2 miles, the road ends at a stop sign. Turn left onto Lake Logan Road. Go about 3.6 miles to the Lake Logan Episcopal Center entrance.

"We're both very competitive people," said Moody. "It's definitely a competition, that's for sure."

Barefoot has been practicing on the course for the past week and said she would like to take a minute or two off her run time. She'd also like to beat her husband.

"Of course, it would be nice to beat Kyle," she said. "He's a stronger biker than I am, and I'm a stronger runner, and we're both pretty even on the swim."

"It'll be interesting to see who will come out on top, but we both support each other no matter what the outcome."

Lake level down

With water levels down at Lake Logan, race officials have been forced to change the swim portion of the triathlon. The swim will take part in the deep end of the lake, near the dam, Duff said. Athletes will still have to run from the lake to the next leg of the race.

"It's going to require a little more energy than we originally wanted to expend," he said.

Despite a possible snag or two, Duff believes this is one of the top races in the region.

"This race is becoming one of the premier athletic events in Western North Carolina," Duff said, "and one of the premier triathlons in the Southeast."

More information: Visit www.setupevents.com and click on the orange "TrySports" icon and then select the Lake Logan Triathlon from the drop-down menu. Volunteers are still needed, and information can be found on the Web site or by contacting Greg Duff at 400-5868.

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