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Triathlon's female winner finds unique way to cool down

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Over the Mountain Triathlon

Saturday, May 31 2008, 7:54 pm

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KINGS MOUNTAIN - Stacey Richardson, the overall female winner of the Over the Mountain Triathlon, needed some therapy after crossing the finish line Saturday afternoon. The Chapel Hill native didn't want the traditional kind of attention by a physician - she desired "kid therapy" at Patriots Park.

Not long after claiming her third straight win in the event, the 36-year-old Richardson took a spot in the splash pad - usually full of young children - for a well-deserved cool down as temperatures approached the mid-80s by the end of the race.

"I'm a mom, so being around kids and hearing their voices cackle ... its kid therapy and its cool therapy," Richardson said. Morrisville's Amie Krasnozn (2:38.02) and Davidson's Sarah Matchett (2:41.40) took second and third, respectively, in the women's open division.

Wilmington's David Sokolofsky, a 27-year-old, was the overall male winner with a time of 2:14.44. He was followed by Tom Clifford (2:18.31), also of Wilmington, and Charlotte's Ashley Ackerman (2:20.04).

"I was first out of the water by just a little bit, then my bike felt really strong today," Sokolofsky said. "I had enough left on the run, and I felt pretty good finishing."

Shelby native Gene Summey finished at 2:42.30 and took eighth in the 45-49 category as he was the top finisher among Cleveland County participants. County residents Stephen Waldrep (2:49.35, 13th in 35-39 male), Richard Lilly (2:55.25, 15th in 45-49 male) and Erik Smith (3:20.19, 16th in 25-29 male) also turned in top 20 times in their age groups.

"The cycling was my strength today," Summey said. "That's due to training with people faster than me around here like Mark Brackett, Chris Rossi and Tom Harris. Running with the City Park group with folks like George Patterson and Richard Lilly really helped out as well.

"There was a headwind on the bike and on the run, but you got the tailwind on the way back."

Shelby's April Cannon won the female Aquabike (swim, bike) category with a time of 2:09.51.

"It felt good. I fractured my ankle in October, so it's good to get back out and compete," Cannon said. "It's awesome for the community, and this is a tough course."

Five hundred competitors, an event record, started the swim portion of the triathlon around 8 a.m. at Moss Lake under overcast conditions. The sun stayed behind the clouds for many of the top finishers during the 45K bike course. The temperature and humidity gradually rose as the athletes tackled the final 10K on foot.

For the first time, the event was a qualifier for the national championship.

"The event went from 350 competitors to 500, which is a big jump," said race producer Bill Scott of Set Up Events. "People just love coming here. The city does a great job and the course is phenomenal. It's one of the favorite courses."

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[Brittany Randolph / The Star](#)
 More than 500 competitors took part in the annual Over the Mountain Triathlon beginning with the swimi across Moss Lake Saturday morning.

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