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## Rival pair run off with wins

Georgia Tech man, Georgia woman win the Lake Murray Triathlon

By JOSEPH PERSON

[jperson@thestate.com](mailto:jperson@thestate.com)

The story at Sunday's Lake Murray Triathlon was more like a bad joke told at an Atlanta watering hole:

What do you get when you throw a Georgia Tech runner and a Georgia cheerleader into a lake?

The answer: the male and female open division winners at the Midlands' oldest and biggest sprint triathlon — a punch line that was not funny to the racers trying to chase down the Georgia transplants.

Simpsonville's Daniel Moss, who ran cross country at Georgia Tech, and former Bulldogs cheerleader Ashley Long of Greenville used strong bike legs to overcome sluggish swims and win by more than a minute each at sunny but breezy Dreher Island State Park.

Told that a Bulldog was the top female, Moss said: "That's funny. Too bad we didn't have our school uniforms on for that."

Actually, the 27-year-old Long showed her school colors with a red-and-black bike, on which she averaged 22 miles per hour over the 16-mile loop through Prosperity's rolling hills. Long was last among the four women in the open division following the 750-meter swim, but she took the lead on the bike course and held it through the 5K run to win in 1 hour, 19 minutes and 27 seconds.

Spartanburg resident Katharine Welling was actually the fastest woman in the field, 14 seconds better than Long. However, the 34-year-old participated as an age-group racer, which meant she was not eligible for the open title, and began the course several start groups behind the elite racers.

"This is my second year racing, so I thought age group would be most suitable for me," said Welling, who swam at Davidson. "I might have to reconsider it (for next year)."

Long grew up in Chicago, the daughter of a collegiate swimmer and a triathlete mother. However, the former gymnast gravitated toward cheering in Athens.

"I love cheerleading just for the camaraderie. It's fun, especially at Georgia where we go to all the football games," Long said. "But neither of (her parents) understood."

Long was uncertain how she would fare Sunday — a week after competing in a half-Ironman (1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike, 13.1-mile run) in Florida and a day after getting up at 4 a.m. to serve as the race director of a 5K run at Furman.

"It's hard to change your mindset from that (half-Ironman) distance to a sprint distance," Long said. "But I ended up feeling better than I anticipated."

Moss, also 27, felt better once he mounted his bike. In fourth place following the swim-to-bike transition, Moss caught Jason Schott, a native of Dahlonega, Ga. — and Moss' former training partner — at mile 5 and did not look back.

"I got on the bike and started hammering," Moss said.

Moss (1:06:01) held off Schott (1:07:20) to post his third victory in this year's S.C. Triathlon Series and become the second consecutive Georgia Tech grad to win at Lake Murray. Former Yellow Jackets' water-polo player Kevin Lisska, who did not return to defend his title, won in 1:08:10 last year.

Columbia's Jeff Brandenburg (1:11:42) and Janice Addison (1:25:59) were the masters (over-40) winners Sunday in a field of 362 finishers.

Amy Pierson served as a volunteer at the race a year after having a heart attack during a cool-down run following her third-place finish.

Reach Person at **(803) 771-8496**