

Sports

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Lisska, Westbury take different routes after finish

Male, female champs pull away from field on bike ride portion of the annual event

By JOSEPH PERSON - jperson@thestate.com

The male and female winners at Sunday's Lake Murray Triathlon had different ideas about celebrating their victories at Dreher Island State Park in Prosperity.

Kevin Lisska planned to head home to Fletcher, N.C., for an 80- to 90-mile bike ride as part of his preparations for the Half Ironman World Championships in Florida in November.

Kimberley Westbury laughed when she heard Lisska's afternoon itinerary.

"I'm going to be having a glass of wine while he's doing his thing," said Westbury, a Greenville native. "I'm 44. That's what old people do."

What Westbury and Lisska did Sunday morning was pull away from the field during the seventh running of the sprint distance race — a 750-meter swim, 16-mile bike and 3.1-mile run — that attracted 350 competitors.

Lisska covered the course in 1 hour, 8 minutes and 10 seconds, nearly 2:30 faster than runner-up Bryan Benitez-Nelson of Columbia. Westbury's 1:19:04 time was almost two minutes better than Greenville's Ashley Long, the second female.

Lisska, 28, who played water polo on Georgia Tech's club team, has won all four races he has entered this spring in the South Carolina triathlon series. After setting a course record last week at the Clemson sprint, Lisska overcame a sluggish swim Sunday.

"I was a little tired. I've been swimming a lot. But I just went all out the whole time," said Lisska, an electrical engineer. "I hammered the bike the whole way. I knew I had a good lead (on the run). I didn't want to let up any because that's when you get in trouble."

Westbury, who returned to triathlons this spring after two years on the professional in-line speed skating circuit, trailed Katie Malone and Amy Pierson leaving the transition area after the swim. But Westbury passed both within the first three miles on the bike and never looked back.

"I knew if I could get a good lead on the bike, I'd have a good chance because I've been strong on the run," said Westbury, the oldest elite racer in the state.

Pierson, 35, finished third among the women but collapsed about a mile into a cool-down run after the race. After being transported to Newberry County Memorial Hospital, the Chapin native was transferred to Palmetto Health Richland. Pierson was listed in good condition by the hospital Sunday night.

The masters (40-and-older) winners were 41-year-old Hugh Myrick of Charleston in 1:13:04 and 47-year-old Cheryl Quinn of Greenville in 1:26:41.

Racers ran the age gamut.

Jack Felix, an eighth-grader at Hilton Head Middle School, was the top male in the 10- to 15-year-old age group. Columbia native Richard Mandell, at age 78 the oldest competitor, won the 75-79 category in 2:12:48.

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Kevin Lisska finishes first Sunday during the Lake Murray Triathlon at Dreher Island State Park in Chapin.