

Large field races in triathlon

Winners, among a state-record 374 participants, complete the course in about an hour.

BY BRENT C. WAGNER
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You might want to brace yourself.

Scott Bredehoft and Jodi Fougeron and hundreds of others are about to make many people feel guilty for what they accomplished on Sunday morning.

While some people were sleeping in, watching golf or eating doughnuts, Bredehoft and Fougeron had a pace that was more brisk, to say the least.

All those two did before 9 a.m. was swim 0.62 miles, bike 13 miles and run 3.1 miles during the Cornhusker State Games Triathlon at Holmes Lake.

Did it so well that in addition to winning the men's and women's race, they get to compete again in September as the Nebraska qualifiers for the Best of the U.S. Triathlon in Minnesota.

Both winners admit you have to be a bit crazy to get into this sport. Apparently Nebraskans are getting crazier every year, as 374 people participated in the race, making it the largest triathlon in Nebraska history.

"You absolutely have to be crazy to do this," Fougeron said. "Just the amount of time you spend training is crazy. Yesterday I went on a 100-mile bike ride to Nebraska City, so there is a little bit of insanity in doing something like that."

Bredehoft says he's not always one to get up so early. A junior at UNL, Bredehoft said if he would not have been at the triathlon on Sunday morning he probably would have been resting after a night downtown with friends. Training for triathlons helps keep him out of trouble, he said.

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Fougeron, 30, is a Lincoln firefighter who also stays busy training for her second Ironman triathlon.

After leading after each stage of the race, Bredehoft, 22, won the men's race in 1 hour, 10 minutes, 9 seconds. Jim Kueffner of Omaha was second, about one minute behind the winner. Kueffner should not feel too bad though. He's 24 years older than Bredehoft.

It was the first triathlon Bredehoft has won, and he's following in his father's footsteps. Gary Bredehoft, the race director, has won the state games triathlon four times and has competed in several Ironman events.

"Being busy with school, I don't get to hang out with my dad as much, so training for this triathlon has been great bonding for us," Scott Bredehoft said. "He's a big influence on me."

Bredehoft pumped his fist and hugged his dad after he crossed the line. He said the win was a shocker, because he has always been a strong swimmer and runner, but only started training seriously on the bike about two months ago.

It was also Fougeron's first win in the state games triathlon, her previous best finish being third. She was in eighth place after the swim, second after the bike and took the lead about one mile into the run before finishing in 1:13.56.

Some people compete in a triathlon because they already enjoyed two of the events and figured they could easily learn another and compete in a triathlon. Fougeron's story is nothing like that.

She played college tennis at Creighton, and says finishing a triathlon is something she always wanted to accomplish. Her first triathlon was during the state games in 2001, and now she's hooked.

The winners finished in just over an hour, but hundreds of others finished throughout the morning in front of a supportive crowd.

Each athlete had a goal, a story and a newfound sense of accomplishment — even if most people think they're crazing for trving.