

Newsletter highlighting the 2002 accomplishments of the

Wright Triathlon Club

representing the triathlon community of the greater Dayton, Ohio, area

www.wrighttriclub.org

Wright Triathlon Club places 2nd in Mideast Region

by Mike Polakowski

(Ed. Note: The Mideast Region of USAT includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan)

Another year, another club series in the history books. Our club has been participating in the Mideast Region Club Race Series (MERCERS) every year since our inception in 1999, and we've never placed lower than

Wendy's, Muncie, Delaware, and Sylvania, plus the finale in Indianapolis.



Yes! we all got medals?

WTC members hanging out after the Wendy's Triathlon, from left: Theresa Borros-Kearney, Mike Polakowski, Paul Day, Rob Lewis, and Scott Percival

third. This year was no exception, although if you happened to check the standings in mid-June, you might wonder how we ever pulled it off. Quite simply, we formulated a plan early in the season, and then executed it perfectly.

The plan was based on the way the series is scored, and it boiled down to selecting races that we thought a lot of members could do, and promoting those

Wright Tri Club Member Competes in Hainan Discovery Triathlon

by Mike Randall

(Ed. Mike Randall traveled to Hainan Island, China, to compete in this 1.8K swim, 55K bike, 12K run event)

The race on Hainan Island is great. Peter Reid put it best over breakfast the day we arrived, "This is like Maui but for 1/4 the cost." The host Hotel is a 5 Star Holiday Inn Resort and the facilities were top notch. We were greeted at the entrance by Race personnel and they helped us check in to the hotel and finish registering for the race. Got a packet for the race which included the usual things like the wrist band, t-shirt, numbers etc.. It also include a brand new pair of 720 Eye Armour Sunglasses with extra lenses and a hard case. A specially printed number belt for the race and other smaller goodies, well worth the \$110 entry fee already.



Dave Hardwick (left) and Don Scarpero await the start of the Sylvania Triathlon

The ball didn't get rolling for us until June 30 at Alum Creek State Park, the site of Wendy's International Tri, but roll it did as we placed second overall among five clubs. Columbus-based Central Ohio Triathlon Team (COTT) buried the rest of the field with 133 race points to our 90, but the net result was 25 MERCERS points for them and 24 for us. We also had stellar performances by triathletes Michelle Kitze (overall female winner), Paul Day, Phyllis Frydman, Rob Lewis, and Judy McLaughlin, (see MERCERS on page 2)

The race was very well organized, smoothly run, there were thousands of people cheering all over the course from start to finish, conditions were also Hawaii like, hot and windy. This was the first ever, there were 106 people racing with 28 of the Pro's. 17 countries were represented as well. Each athlete got his own rack space and plenty of room to setup. The swim was an out and back in the bay no wetsuits needed or allowed. the bike was an out and back on really smooth roads closed to local traffic so basically we had the entire course to ourselves, the only traffic was the TV crews and race officials. The run was a large loop with the last few k's on hard sand after crossing a soft sand hill to the finish.

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MERCERS (continued from page 1)

and duathletes Brian Barker and Shane Brenner, all of whom won their respective age groups!

The next MERCERS race for the club would come two weeks later in Muncie, Indiana, home of the ever-popular Muncie Endurathon. With no less than 11 clubs scrambling for points, the half-Ironman distance Endurathon would arguably be our toughest challenge of the series. We had 17 members compete and of those, Cheryl Chaney, Kitze (second overall female), Gregg Slayton, and Jeff Watern placed in the top 10% in their age groups, winning awards for themselves and extra points for the club. Our 86 race points were good enough for fifth, or 21 MERCERS points. The Chicago Tri Club was first with 125 race points.

If Muncie was our most hotly contested race, the tri at Delaware State Park, on July 28, was our least, with only one other club showing. Unfortunately, it was the local powerhouse, COTT, whose 20 members scored 82 race points to capture first. Our small but determined contingent of Lenna Kirby, Russ Kremer, Mike Randall, Don Scarpero, and Jim Schwartzhoff scored 30 race points to bring home 24 MERCERS points, with Jim winning his age group. So far, so good, with 69 out of a possible 75 series points after only four weeks in the action.

Our pattern of a focus race every two weeks continued with Sylvania on August 11. This Toledo-area event grows in popularity every year, so it takes a lot of top notch performances to score big points. We came through in spectacular fashion, with Rob Lewis the overall winner, Slayton the masters winner, and Day and Brenner winning their respective age groups! In fact, our nine club members scored 78 race points for fourth, adding 22 MERCERS points to our total. Team Toledo, the race organizers, had 71 members and beat the next two teams combined with 199 points. Ouch! We'll need to recruit a few more members before we try to tackle them.

That brings us to the championship race in Indianapolis. Despite the September 8 date, which siphoned off a few members seeking glory at Ironman Wisconsin, we managed to field 14 racers. That was second in number only to the local Indy club, and if it could happen at any race, the best possible race for it to occur was this one. Once again Slayton claimed the masters title, and Barker, Brenner, and Abby White all were age group winners. Those, plus solid performances by Lewis, Day, and Patrick Hartman, helped us chalk up 88 race points. Since this was the series finale, it was worth double series points. Indy's 24 members won the day with 104 race points, but we took second (by a slim 3-point margin) to add 48 MERCERS points to our total.

We ended up with 139 series points out of a possible 150, second only to Chicago with 144. Considering that we were tied for 9th out of 17 teams (four of which had 98 series points) going into the finale, and that we catapulted to second overall is a testament to the talent and motivation of our members; hats off to all who participated.

The obvious question is, "How can we capture first?" That's not an easy one to answer because we did so many things right, but here are the areas where we may be able to find a couple extra points. First, there are lightly



Bill McDougall and Judy McLaughlin after the championship race at Eagle Creek Park in Indianapolis

attended races that can bring big points without a Herculean effort. This year, Delaware was one of those, and we made good use of it. Others are Grand Rapids and Louisville, which had three and two clubs competing, respectively (the Ann Arbor club scored 25 series points for a win at Louisville with a single participant!). Second, there are focus races where we might be able to move up a notch or two with just a few extra points. Those extra points can come from anyone, even if they finish last in their age group. Examples this year were Muncie (2 race points away from another series point, 10 points away from 2 more) and Sylvania (10 race points away from a 3-way tie for second and 2 more series points). Finally, just keep racing. That will make us more likely to score more performance points, and those aren't capped like distance or participation points. We are the #2 tri club in five states, and we can go head to head with clubs from Chicago, Indy, and Ann Arbor, and come out on top. Let's take it to #1 next year. MP

(HAINAN continued from page1)

Tons of volunteers and food and drink. I had a great time and really recommend this race to anyone, the location is beautiful, the cost is very cheap, the resort was \$73 a night and included a breakfast buffet.

I managed to hold on and placed third in my age group. I can say it was a really cool feeling to finally after all these years of attending awards banquets to get

called on stage and given an award. I truly expect this race to grow in popularity, it is put on by IMG sports the same people that put on Phuket, and IM New Zealand.

The race will be shown on OLN at some point in the future.
MR

Wright Tri Club Member Competes in World Masters Games in Australia

What It Means to be a World Master by Dave Hardwick

The athletes were chanting and raising their hands. We were all marching in procession, grouping around our sports banners and the banners and flags of our countries. We represented 97 countries and were going to participate in 25 main sporting events. We stood before family, friends and spectators from all over the Victoria region of Australia. There were nearly 25,000 of us who were ready to compete in the games of the 2002 Melbourne World Masters Games. An additional 25,000 spectators watched as the torch for the 5th World Masters Games was lit to start this the largest multisporting event ever. I was there dwarfed by the scale but very much a part of the happening. A World Master, that is what I was. I felt I had a right to be there. I was ready to compete.

Yes, going to this years games was all that I believed it would be and more. I learned a lot about myself this year as I trained and readied myself for this event. So, I hope I can give you a little of the flavor of what it means to be called a World Master.

What made this event so special? All of you reading this have also accomplished great things; competing in ironman triathlons, running marathons and competing against world and international class competitors. So, why is this different? There were several things that made this so special.



Dave Hardwick tests the triathlon podium at the World Masters Games in Melbourne, Australia.

First, I remember the training. I had a focus that narrowed with each passing day. The kind of complete

training that I had not done since in over 25 years, when I last competed as a member of the University of Kentucky track Team. For four years, since the last games in 1998, I had planned to make the trip to compete in Australia. However, it was after coming to Ohio and then starting my final months of concentrated training that things started to really gel. This was when I joined the Wright Triathlon Club and sharpened my training allowing me to feel that I could compete with some of the best athletes in the world. In my last five months I developed a comparative plan that related all my previous triathlon and track experiences with what I expected would be a supreme effort required at the World Games. Each factor was reviewed. These included pulse rate, bike, swim and run mileage, numbers and types of races and race events, weekly weigh-ins, and checks on body fat; were reviewed. I also started eating multiple meals during the day. Five to six meals per day were the plan. In these last few months I started twice a day workouts and stayed with them up until arriving in Australia. My normal base of training consisted of swimming, biking and running. What was different was the tailored weight training sessions with Laura Ortiz of the Wright Patterson AFB training staff and the Potocorvo dance studio workouts where I focused on my core of balance, flexibility and coordination. To improve my swimming was also a major training event as I requested support from Brent Peaden, a head coach of the Raiders Swimming Team. I surprised him with my dedication to improve beyond what would be expected of someone of over 50 years of age. On top of this were my weekly massage sessions, with Dick Wagner, and even a couple of visits to a local chiropractor. I remember several times when I was out on a training run that I wished I was at home resting or doing something else. Then I would tell myself "I wonder if my Russian competitor is training today?" At this point I would slug out the miles knowing I would be ahead if he had decided to take the day off.

Another reason this was special was the knowledge that I was going to be an international in another land, far away. A place we all call "Down Under." There I would be a minority representing this great United States. This also made me aware I had a great responsibility. I had to be competitive. I had to wave the flag. I had to give a good showing in each of the four events I was in. I had to challenge the best. I had to want to win.

Then there was the excitement, the adrenaline. I had never felt this kind of synergy energy before. When I was in the Melbourne Cricket Ground that could hold 100,000 people, surrounded by thousands of athletes, there was excitement all around me. One of the local

radio stations was waking through the crowd with a microphone and I was asked to comment on what I thought about the games. She asked me where I was from, what events I was going to be in and my preparation and training for the games. I felt energy and excitement. A high of joy that cannot be matched. This year's event was the largest gathering of athletes ever. Olympians with elites; elites with serious competitors they were all there.

Then there were the friendships. Every athlete I encountered was friendly. There were the Australians that I trained with at the Brighton Baths as we tried to ready ourselves for the swim in the very cold ocean water. Each had their story. There was the bicyclist I met who wanted

to show me how to ride on their streets. There was the two gals from Hawaii who had never swum in water so cold. On the organized Yarra River Cruise, my wife Laurie and I were given gifts including boomerang pins that meant we were going to return to Australia again. We shared what sports we were in and training ideas with our newfound Australian friends. The Australians wanted to show us their great country. To some of these friends I can put names. I met Pedro Melendez, a triathlete from Guatemala, while practicing the ocean swim. He ended up being one of the athletes I teamed up with during some of my training sessions. I also met a pentathlete, Michael Talanskas from Arizona. We were on the 4x400 meter relay team together. The most memorable of all the names was my Australian friend Stuart Nicol. We raced each other in two of the races I was in. In the 10 K run he beat me by a few seconds. After the race we met and talked and we found out we would race again a few days later in the 8 K Cross County event. On that day I had my best race of the games, finishing 17th, and bested this fine Australian competitor by a couple of minutes. The score was evened so he invited Laurie and me to his home for a home style Australian BBQ. We had to "heave in." to the great food treats his wife, Pauline, prepared for us. He also showed me the main running locations in Melbourne and told me about the sports club in which he participated. Very similar to our Wright Triathlon Club. He had a lovely family and a beautiful home. Also, friendliness was displayed by the Australian manners of speech. Such as, "How you going" and "No worries" all added to the feeling that the people appreciated our being there.

The facilities were Olympic, Olympic, Olympic. All top notch. I just wish I had had more time to use all of the facilities. Australians all love sports and they have some of the finest training facilities I have seen anywhere.



Dave Hardwick (in red) competes in the cross-country run at the World Masters Games.

I also gained much from the experience. Here is some of what I learned. Packing and hauling a bike is a hassle but with a good bike case and some patience it can be done. Using plastic ties and pieces of cardboard is all you need to successfully pack a bike. Make sure you let the air out of the tires, too. Swimming in the ocean there was probably the most exciting and challenging part. I practiced in a place called the Brighton Baths, a shark proofed area about a mile around. There was also a local swimming coach, Graeme Mills, who put us through drills to ensure we were ready to face the 50-degree water. Without this training I could have never made it. I almost panicked and hyperventilated the first time I was in the cold water. But I did get used to the water. I remember one practice I had while there was while there was a storm off shore. This was the hardest swimming I had ever done. I was bushed after only 29 minutes of fighting the breakers, during this workout. Bike riding was also a challenge. The Australians drive and ride on the left side of the road. Knowing where to pass was something I never fully got used to. Also, every rider in Australia that I met was dressed out like they were in the Tour De France. Probably the greatest challenge to me was doing multiple events in a 10-day period. I raced four events; 10K run, 8 K Cross Country, 4x400 meter relay (Anchor) and the Olympic Distance Triathlon. It was difficult to have quality all out efforts in all of these events. I did my best. To help me with this aspect I had daily massages, both before-and-after each event. However, still my triathlon suffered. I was off by 20 minutes of what I had expected to do. Finishing 21st in my age category and 2:50+. Some of this I attribute to the sustained winds during the triathlon and the other portion was due to my lack of full recovery between the other events.

My last lesson learned was about some new products. These were displayed at the great World Masters sports fair. Food products abounded. Sustangen, a protein energy drink was one Australian product.

Sustain Cereal was another. And then there was Vegemite. Australians swear that this is why they are so healthy. Note: I did not see a obese person the whole time I was in Australia. Lastly, there was the Skins support tights. I bought a pair, but the verdict is still out on how well these will help my training.

So this is what it means to be a World Master. Trained to the hilt. Going to the Ultimate Away Game. Having enough adrenaline to launch a Battleship. Meeting and competing with World Champion Athletes and then joining them for lunch or a latte'. Competing in some of the best facilities that exist. Being asked to participate in testing products designed to enhance athletic performance. And so much more.

The State of the Wright Triathlon Club

by Paul Day

Welcome to this first "Year-in Review" letter of the Wright Triathlon Club. The Wright Triathlon Club was founded in 1999 mostly through the enthusiastic efforts of Gordon Gerson. Due to his impressive organization, club membership ballooned to over 90, attendance at monthly meetings overflowed the backroom at the old Elsa's Sports Bar, and weekly club workouts were well-attended.

At the beginning of this year, there was a feeling among the club officers that some things in the club needed to change. It was tough to find an interesting speaker for every month, and even tougher to get a reasonable number of members to attend every month, particularly in the summer when training schedules gobble up our spare time. Regularly scheduled club workouts were not practical unless a reasonable number of members participated regularly. Instead the club has relied more on the "ad hoc" scheduling of workouts through the club web discussion page and private E-mails.

While the club cut back from its previous ambitious schedule of having a meeting each month, we did have some good meetings with interesting speakers this year. The February meeting featured a talk on triathlon training and racing from Scott Erdmann of Health & Fitness Promotions (HFP). I think everyone appreciated getting the "inside" information from the organization that has done so much for our sport in Ohio. The April meeting featured a talk on the mental and psychological aspects of training and racing from sports psychologist and triathlete Dr. Barb Walker. I think everyone who attended gained some valuable insight in this often ignored part of our sport. The September meeting featured stories from our own Ironman finishers, many of whom had just returned from Ironman Wisconsin. We had a large contingent of Ironman finishers present, and this ended up being one of our longest meetings, as other members peppered the Ironman finishers with questions, and some of us stayed until nearly 10 p.m. discussing the nitty-gritty of completing an Ironman. Our October meeting featured a talk on "strength training for triathletes" from member Michelle Judson, who had recently become certified as a personal

fitness trainer. So there I was as the announcer cried out at the end of the triathlon. "Representing the Wright Triathlon Club of Dayton Ohio we have David Hardwick, contestant from the USA, finishing." As I crossed the finish line the announcer asked me. "Can you tell us how was the race?" What do you think I said?

The Games were fun and fulfilling. The next World Masters Games will be in Edmonton Canada. The web site at <http://www.2005worldmasters.com/> is already operational. I am going to go. How about joining me and becoming a World Master? DH

(Ed. Note: to see more pictures from the World Masters Games, go to www.wrighttriclub.org)

fitness trainer. Michelle gave an informative and entertaining talk that appealed to triathletes of all levels.

In addition, the club had a Memorial Day open-water-swimming picnic, as well as a get together after the Wendy's regional sprint-distance championship. In November, we had the club's traditional Hawaii Ironman Party to watch NBC's coverage of the event. While we were disappointed by the truncated broadcast due to a long-running football game, the food was plentiful, and watching the show was a good motivator to start thinking about next season. (What does it take to get to triathlon's biggest show?) I believe that next year we will be able to watch for at least one club member, as Greg Slayton qualified for next year's Hawaii IM with a great performance at the recent Ironman Florida.



After the open-water swimming practice, Memorial Day, Caesar Creek State Park. From left, Mike Polakowski, Paul Day, Mike Randall, Theresa Borros-Kearney, and Lenna Kirby

While the club's current membership of about 55 may not match the club's record high of 1999, the club has a lot of potential for growth in both membership and in activities. The club's success in the MERCERS (see above article) shows that, competitively, we stack up pretty well in this region. The club could improve in the

areas of group workouts, club activities, and community outreach. How will the club change in 2003? That is up to you, and every other club member. If there are changes you would like to see in the club, contact one of the club officers, or consider running for office yourself. If there is a particular area you would like to work on, you can be appointed as a club coordinator or committee member for this area. A good example from this year was our discovery that member Mike Randall had experience with a well-sponsored club in Wisconsin and a lot of ideas how our club could get sponsorship. As a result, he was appointed the club's sponsorship coordinator, and we expect to be a much better sponsored club in 2003.

I am optimistic about the future of the Wright Triathlon Club. I hope you are, too. I'll see you in 2003.

PD

Important websites:

Club home page:

<http://www.wrighttriclub.org>

