

The first wave of competitors hits the water as the 30th annual Santa Cruz Triathlon gets under way on Main Beach on Sunday morning. SHMUEL THAYER/SENTINEL

Starting with a splash

Triathlon- (Santa Cruz Sentinel)
Hourlong fog delay doesn't dampen spirits

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SANTA CRUZ — With the Black Eyed Peas song "Let's Get It Started" blasting across Santa Cruz's Main Beach, more than 600 triathletes — many of them shivering in wet wetsuits — waited patiently on Sunday morning.

The 1.5-kilometer swim that kicks off the Olympic-sized 30th annual Santa Cruz Triathlon was delayed an hour because of heavy fog.

"First, we were at the mercy of the weather," event director Jack Larson said. "And, secondly, we rely on the Fire Department Marine Safety Division captain Rob Oatey to let us know when they feel they can provide us with support in the water. We let them call that."

Some athletes didn't stay idle though.

"It was kind of fun to watch the

racers making sand castles while they were waiting," Larson added.

At 8:45 a.m. — 45 minutes after race was slated to begin — waves of cheers signaling relief rippled through the crowd as the pier

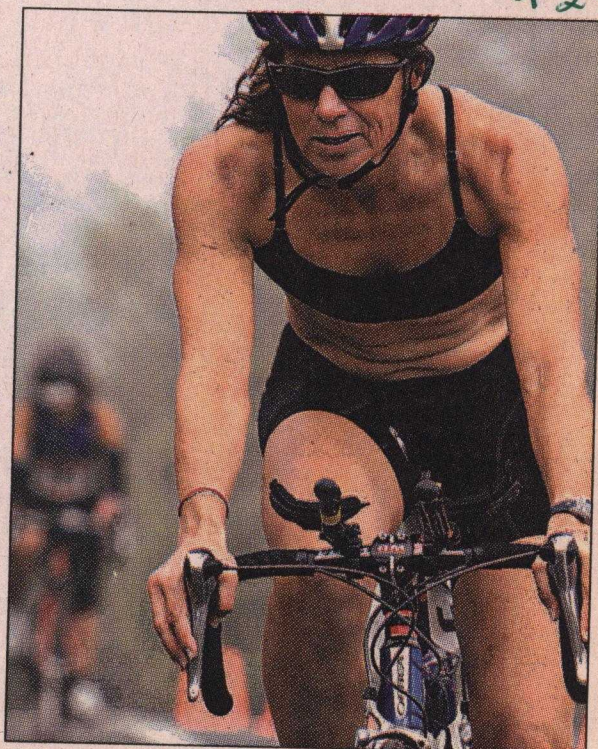
TOP FINISHERS

MEN

NAME, AGE	TIME
1. Jack Calhoun, 23	1:56:45
2. Eric Clarkson, 30	2:00:08
3. Pierre Billa, 29	2:01:15
4. Albert Boyce, 48	2:02:17
5. Thomas Emerick, 47	2:03:43

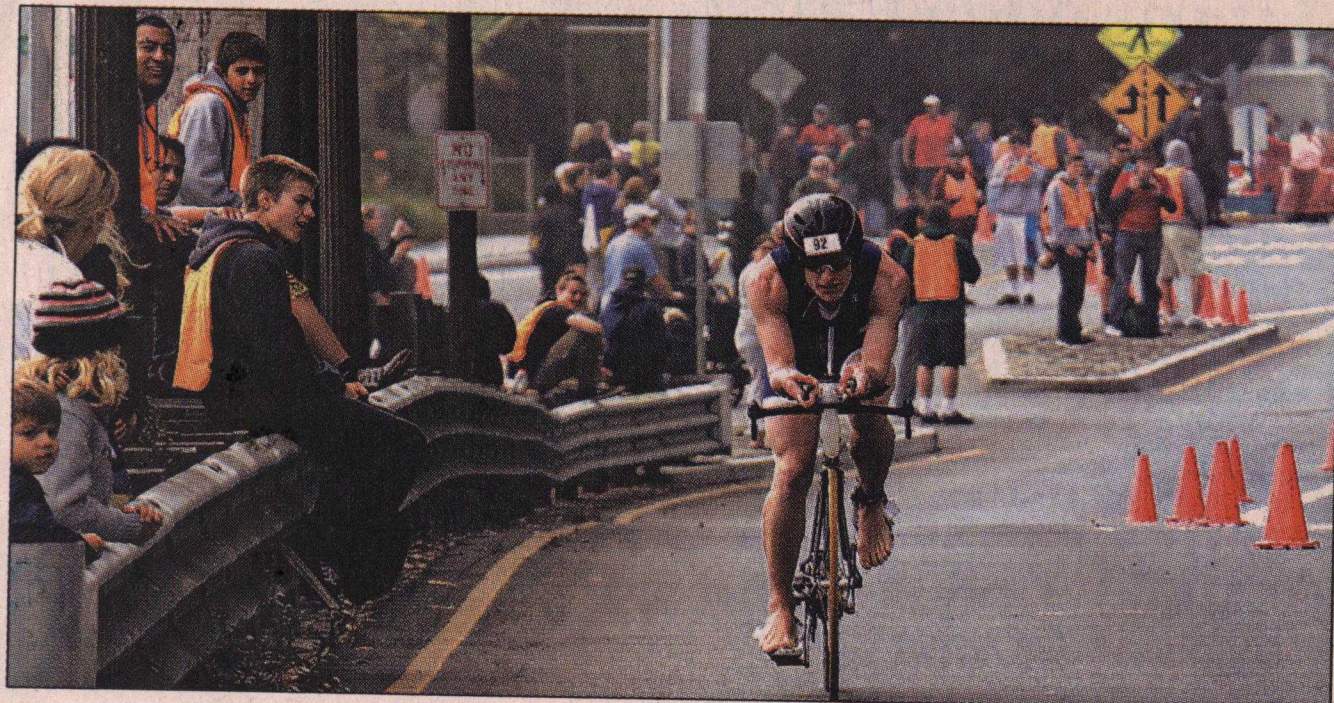
WOMEN

1. Brooke Bishop, 26	2:16:04
2. Sarah Cameto, 32	2:16:19
3. Katheln Cronje, 31	2:18:42
4. Megumi Masuda, 39	2:25:25
5. Mimi Winsberg, 47	2:25:31



A triathlete looks strong as she heads out of the transition area for the ride to Davenport on Sunday.

SHMUEL THAYER/SENTINEL



Santa Cruz Triathlon men's winner Jack Calhoun has the course to himself as he coasts into the transition area on Sunday. SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

TRIATHLON

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emerged from its foggy cloak, an indication that the race would start soon. At 9:05, the race finally began.

Santa Cruz Masters swim coach Eric Clarkson and UC Santa Cruz alum Jack Calhoun traded finish times this year to both the disappointment and delight of Clarkson.

Calhoun, 23, who finished third last year in 2 hours even, won Sunday's race in 1:56. Clarkson, 30, who was one of Calhoun's swim coaches at UCSC, finished in 2 hours this year to place second — after clocking in at 1:56 last year.

San Francisco's Pierre Billa, 29, finished third at 2:01.

"The irony is weighing heavy on me," said Clarkson,

who finished runner-up for the fourth straight year. "I haven't won my hometown event yet."

Still, he was fully supportive of Calhoun's success.

"I'm so proud of him every year," Clarkson said. "He works so hard, so I'm really, really happy for him. I coached him for a long time, he's been volunteering and racing this event for four years. Obviously, he's fast."

Calhoun credits his new bike with helping improve his time from last year.

"It's a high-performance bike and I was in sync with it," Calhoun said. "Not only did it help me go faster on the bike, it helped me save energy for the run."

San Francisco's Brooke Bishop, 26, finished first for women at 2:16, less than two-tenths of a second ahead of 32 year-old Sarah Cameto of

Clayton.

Cameto finished more than two minutes ahead of third-place finisher Katheln Cronje, 31.

"I was worried when we heard the swim might be canceled because of the fog," Bishop said. "I swam in college, so that's definitely my strongest leg."

A smiling Bishop, who beat her time last year by nearly 10 minutes, said it was fun because of how the route is organized.

"We love this course because you get to pass all of your teammates, everyone is giving high-fives, smiling and having a good time," Bishop said.

The hourlong wait in the morning confused the athletes programmed to warm up in the water right before the start.

"The fog was coming and going; there was a minute at

about 8:15 the fog pushed out, so I got in the water a second time," Clarkson said. "I got in four times. I'm really, really glad we got to swim."

Seasoned triathlete Hope Gelbach, 47, adjusted calmly to the unforeseen delay and finished second in her age group at just under 2:40.

"You have to expect the unexpected," she said, adding that all the 80 races she has competed in have had something unexpected happen, but this is the first one to be delayed.

The crowd also got to enjoy the unexpected when competitor Tim Reynolds, 32, donned a purple and fuchsia tutu for the bike and run events.

"I lost a bet," Reynolds said flatly. He admitted it was hard to keep a smile for all the delighted spectators, but still managed to finish 10th in his age group at 2:18.