

More than 100 compete in triathlon through Lawrence

By Kiera Blessing kblessing@eagletribune.com | Posted: Monday, September 28, 2015 5:45 am

LAWRENCE — The top three competitors were neck-and-neck, barreling down the last few yards of the race on Campagnone Common, victory so close within their grasp.

It was 23-year-old Logan Greenblatt of Brighton who ultimately pulled through and won the sixth annual Brickman's Triathlon Sunday, the first of dozens of professional competitors and amateurs to complete the three-part race.

Greenblatt, who has been competing in triathlons since he was only 13, said the win felt “fabulous.”

“It’s amazing,” he continued. “It’s a great race, and a great way to end the season, too.”

More than 100 other athletes joined Greenblatt for the annual Brickman's race and fundraiser on the crisp autumn morning. Small enough to welcome first-timers but rigorous enough to attract seasoned swimmers, runners and bikers, the triathlon raises money for the Lawrence YMCA and the Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity.

“I was a board member at Habitat, and we were looking to do something to get a little more public awareness, a little bit of fundraising, to do something fun,” said Gerry Pouliot, the triathlon director and founder. “I just thought it was be a great synergy to do the swim here (at the YMCA), have it out on the Common, racing in the street in an urban setting, which you know is really kind of unique for a triathlon. And we were able to pull it off.”

The race consisted of a 250-yard serpentine swim in the YMCA pool, followed by a 10.2-mile bike ride around the city, and culminated in a 3-mile run around Campagnone Common. Competitors ranged in age from 13 to their late 60s, and traveled from as far as Connecticut and Maine.

Following the race, the organizers held an award ceremony inside the YMCA's gymnasium, adding a community feel to the day's events. Competitors who finished first in their age group received a heavy, red brick with a gold plate engraved with the accomplishment, while Greenblatt received a massive wooden plaque that he told Pouliot may be his favorite trophy yet.



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Courtesy photo/Jennifer Hilton Gary Morelli, CEO of the Merrimack Valley YMCA, left, and Gerry Pouliot, former Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity board member, right, present Mayor Daniel Rivera with the 2015 Brickman Leadership Award for his commitment to health and excellence for the city of Lawrence.

The first-place finisher among women was Rebekah Broe, 29, of Newton, with a time of 59 minutes and 29 seconds, just behind Greenblatt's 51 minutes and 18 seconds.

Pouliot said about 80 individuals registered to race, as well as another 20 or so who competed as part of relay teams. Registration was down a bit this year, like many small races around the country, Pouliot said. In an effort to "keep it fresh," the organizers applied to have the race sanctioned by USA Triathlon, the national governing body for such races. It was recognized by USAT for the first time this year.

"What's great about the race is the format...is really great for first-timers," Pouliot said. "So we wanted to bring in some more people who were a little more competitive too, so this draws people coming in who want to be more competitive, or who want to score points to qualify for nationals and all that stuff."

Greenblatt, who has competed in major races like IronMan in Montreal — a grueling race that includes a 2.5-mile swim, 112-mile bike ride, and 26.2-mile run — said the community feel that makes Brickman good for newcomers is what makes it enjoyable.

"It's nice to have the community involved," he said. "At these other, larger races, there's a lot of money involved. So you get this like, this sense of profit. They're not necessarily in it for the sport, for the achievement. ...(Here) everyone's cheering you on, and they're amazed that you're doing it, and there's a lot of first-timers doing it. It's really more of a personal feat here rather than spewing dollars and giving it to the man."