

Five-Peat for Buff Triathletes

By Adam Hodges
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CU triathletes started off Sunday morning with a prescient cheer from the shores of Lake San Antonio—site of the collegiate triathlon championships. CU triathletes substituted the CU fight song—banned this year due to wording deemed inappropriate by race directors—with a military style call that ended in a countdown to “CU FIVE!” The squad then went on to take its fifth national collegiate triathlon championship in as many years.

“Both the quality and quantity of the competition at nationals has increased,” said Neal Henderson, coach of the CU triathlon team. “This was our closest team race in a while.” CU set a new team record with an overall time—consisting of the top three men and women finishers from the school—of 13 hours 49 minutes. Cal Poly was close on their heels with a time of 14:03 and UC-Santa Barbara finished third in 14:36.

CU’s Beth Anderson shattered the course record on her way to winning the women’s individual title. “It was a brutal start,” said Anderson of the 1.5K swim. “The women were very aggressive and I missed getting out with the lead pack.” Anderson exited the water in fifth place but put a comfortable two-minute lead on the field by the end of the 40K bike. Without looking back, she added another minute to her lead during the 10K run. Anderson crossed the line with an overall time of 2:15:52.

CU placed four women in the top ten, a strong performance that aided in the team’s victory. CU’s Kerry Barnholt placed third overall in a time of 2:18:14 and team president Gretchen Keisling finished fifth in 2:25:45.

“We had a strong race,” said Keisling. Coming from the mountains, CU dominated the hilly bike course. “That’s representative of the type of training available in Boulder,” said Keisling. “We get out there and just pull away from the other teams on the bike.”

Senior Greg Woods hammered out a twelfth place finish in 2:13:14 to lead the men’s contingent from CU. Chris Valenti, a former CU runner who recently switched to triathlons, finished fifteenth overall and Marcelo DeAlmeida, who had a breakthrough performance, finished seventeenth.

“Everyone pulled together,” said Coach Henderson, “and we were luckily able to pull off a fifth in a row.”

Henderson prepared for his coaching role on Sunday by competing in Saturday’s mountain bike triathlon, part of the weekend long Wildflower Triathlons Festival. Henderson cruised to a win in his age group and missed an overall win after taking some wrong turns that cost him time.

Also on Saturday was the long course triathlon—1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike, 13.1 mile run—for professionals. Nick Cady, who won the men’s collegiate race last year as part of the CU team, debuted in his first race as a pro with a strong tenth place finish. Teri Duthie, last year’s women’s collegiate champion from CU also debuted as a pro. Duthie had a strong swim and bike but was forced to drop out on the run due to a nagging foot injury.

Next up for the CU triathlon team is the Buffalo Springs Half-Ironman in Lubbock, Texas at the end of June. And, of course, the Buffs are already thinking about a six-peat at next year’s collegiate championships.

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