Pacific Daily News
SPORTS
28 Monday, May 5, 2014
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This Sunday in THE SCORE Expanded local sports
Mother's Day
■ Athletes can be thankful after all they put their mothers through.

$1 on Guam

Epperson, Iijima win sprint triathlon race

By Jay Leon Guerrero
For Pacific Daily News

The Guam Triathlon Federation hosted more than 70 triathletes yesterday for a Sprint Series Triathlon race at Hoover Park in Piti. The triathletes finished the race and then assisted the Piti Pride Program in a beach cleanup.

Dia

Triathletes started yesterday morning with a 750-meter swim, followed by a 20-kilometer bike, and a 5K run. Charlie Epperson edged Jonathan Wildi to take first place with a time of 1 hour, 2 minutes and 40 seconds. Wildi led at the second transition point, but surrendered the lead to Epperson in the run. Wildi finished with a time of 1:03:55. Cameron O'Neal finished third in the men's division with a time of 1:06:51.

Epperson biked in his running shoes, which saved him some time at the second transition.

"This was my first time racing

First to the finish line: Charlie Epperson runs the last leg of the Guam Triathlon Federation's Sprint Series Triathlon yesterday at Hoover Park in Piti. Epperson was the first finisher overall with a time of 1 hour, 2 minutes and 40 seconds. Manami Iijima was the first female finisher in 1:11:06. Cintia Desrosiers-Rivera/For Pacific Daily News

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as they cleaned the area. Family, friends and race volunteers also helped out with the cleanup.

"Our organization wanted to focus on the triathletes because they use the preserve here in Piti," said Dia.

"This is an unbelievable place to train and we are lucky," said Epperson. He commended the Piti Pride Program for its efforts and was thankful it came out to spread awareness to the athletes. "Without organizations like (the Piti Pride Program) our waters would not be as clean and beautiful," he added.

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Epperson biked in his running shoes, which saved him some time at the second transition.

"This was my first time racing against (Wildi); he's a strong swimmer and biker," said Epperson.

Wildi came into the second transition station with a 30-second lead on Epperson.

"My transition was fast and I ended up catching up to him at the turn," added Epperson.

Manami Iijima was fifth overall and the first female triathlete to cross the finish line with a time of 1:11:06.

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Iijima — who said she was exhausted from competing in last month's events, which included a 50-mile bike race and the Guam International Marathon — was pleased with her performance.

After the race, Iijima and the rest of her fellow competitors helped the Piti Pride Program for a beach and roadside cleanup.

"This is very a good program. We practice here and we need to keep the area free from trash to keep us injury-free and to keep this place looking beautiful," said Iijima.

Jane Dia is the head coordinator for the Piti Pride Program, and she worked with GTF President Mark Cruz to organize the event.

"The members took a survey to help develop aspects of the campaign and the feedback was good," said Dia.

Dia had a booth at the event and gave the athletes waterproof tattoos.

After the event, athletes each grabbed gloves and trash bags to help clean the area around Hoover Park. Every athlete gladly wore the Piti Pride Program waterproof tattoo as they cleaned the area. Family, friends and race volunteers also helped out with the cleanup.

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Top five

- **Male division:** Charlie Epperson, 1:02:40; Jonathan Wildi, 1:03:55; Cameron O'Neal, 1:06:51; Shin Miyagi, 1:07:02; Tyler Thorne, 1:11:40.
- **Female division:** Manami Iijima, 1:11:06; Kelly Dawes, 1:18:36; Lynn Mattix, 1:25:23; Katherine Mabel Leigh, 1:29:01; Karly O'Neal, 1:32:26.