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Bajan teen dominates Rainbow Cup Triathlon

Friday, June 12th 2009



TOP TRIATHLETES: Overall winners **Kelsey Kooman**, fourth from left, of Utah, USA, and 18-year-old Barbadian Jason Wilson, third from right, with the other prize-winners in the 2009 Toyota Rainbow Cup International Triathlon at Grafton Beach, Tobago.

After dropping out of the race with a flat tyre three years ago, 18-year-old Barbadian Jason Wilson returned with a vengeance at this year's Toyota Rainbow Cup International Triathlon held at Grafton Beach, Tobago last Saturday.

The young Bajan, who has received a scholarship from the International Triathlon Union (ITU), dominated the Olympic distance event, even lapping last year's winner Reginald Douglas of Nevis, who finished second.

Three Trinidadians, who are now the national champions, Clarence Tobias, Ancil Greene and David Hay grabbed the third, fourth and fifth overall spots, respectively.

The event doubled as the National Championships in both Olympic and Sprint distances.

In the female division, Kelsey Kooman, of Utah, USA, returned after two years to recapture the number one spot. She was followed home by Kristina Stoney of St Kitts/Nevis and veteran T&T triathlete Jacqueline Jodhan, the national female champion.

Gwen Pullman of the USA and Rebecca Cross of T&T took the other top spots.

The top five winners in the Olympic distance event received cash prizes and specially-designed ceramic plaques. All finishers received Rainbow Cup medals.

Hailed as the "biggest and best" triathlon event in the English-speaking region, the fifth annual Toyota Rainbow Cup attracted 19 competitors in the Olympic distance race and 82 in the Sprint (half the Olympic distance), plus 20 youngsters and nine relay teams.

More than 40 members of Team Hope completed the event for the first time in their lives, after training under Jason Gooding and Sebastian Paddington since November last year. The group raised \$250,000 to help children with special disabilities.

Their goal is to raise \$1 million next year when the event is staged at the same location on the long weekend of May 29.

The winner of the Sprint (male) was James Weekes, of St Kitts/Nevis, followed by Trinidadian Daniel Koo, Samuel Blankendal of Suriname and Troy Felix of Grenada.

Tamiko Butler of Antigua was the first female in the Sprint, followed by Carolien Marlet of Suriname, Lara Smith and Marydell Westman, both of the USA, and Rebecca

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Promising Trinidadian Akeil Baptiste suffered some shoe problems after being fourth overall in the Sprint, falling to seventh overall and the second Trinidadian behind Koo.

Mark London of Tobago won the 13-15 age group, followed by Shane Corbie and Cathal Long.

Mohini Seejattan was the girls winner in this category, followed by Dayna Bayne and Raisa Saney.

Jean-Marc Granderson won the under-9 age group as the only competitor.

Sachin Sankar won the 10-12 age group, followed by Isaac Bayne and Sachin Seejattan. Elizabeth Long and Chelsea Mohammed were first and second in this group.

All results can be found on www.odesseytiming.com.

THA Secretary for Sport Claudia Groome-Duke started the race as she did last year and afterwards was high in praise of the event and its organisers, the Rainbow Warriors Triathlon Club.

Sponsors of the premier triathlon event included the Tobago House of Assembly, Grafton Beach Resort, Blue Waters and Monster Energy Drink, Plantation Beach Villas, NLCB, Peter Gremli Car Rentals, Ice House, Summerland Suites, Sullivan Court, Crown Point Hotel, Blue Horizon, Radio Tambrin and Tobago Channel 5.

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