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## Junior triathlon big success

By **JANE MCMANUS**

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MAMARONECK — Will Mayer had two dinners on Friday night. First there were the chicken nuggets at 5, followed by a steak at 9. The 7-year-old had a good reason however — he was getting ready for the inaugural Mamaroneck Schools Foundation Junior Triathlon, held yesterday morning at Hommocks Middle School.

"He was very excited," said his mother, Beth.

Mayer was one of 250 kids who registered for the event — a sellout in a community where many parents compete in endurance events. The Mamaroneck district students, ages 7-17, were divided into age groups and completed a swim from one to seven lengths of the pool depending on age, biked between 1.5 and seven miles, and ran between a half-mile and 1.5 miles.

"I was a little worried about the swimming," said 10-year-old Mia Cliggott-Perlt, who sprinted to the finish with her hair still damp and coated with glitter thrown at the finish line. "But I noticed you could catch up after."

The idea for the event came from a local parent. John Steigerwald is poised to compete this November in his ninth Ironman, a grueling trial that includes a century bike ride and a marathon back-to-back. His daughter Brianna, 9, competed yesterday, while Karina will have to wait a year until she is old enough.

"It's very fulfilling," Steigerwald said. "The thing about it is I got started in this late. I always read about the Ironman but thought I'd never be able to do it."

Rarely do things go perfectly during a first-time undertaking of an event so large. The MSF Junior Tri got it right in the areas that count; the course was well laid out and the 250 competitors were well directed and safe. Balloons, volunteers and even the post-race muffins were plentiful.

There were, however, a series of glitches in the results, which meant the awards ceremony wasn't held until an hour after most of the kids had finished. Parents discovered the problem when preliminary results were taped to the wall, and it took organizers time to sort out what was throwing everything off. By that time, many of the families had moved on to start the weekend.

But that didn't detract from the overall goal of the day, which was to introduce kids to a sport many hadn't tried, and to raise money for the Mamaroneck schools. Registration cost just \$10 and was offset through sponsorships with businesses including New York Sports Club and the restaurant Plates.

MSF hopes to expand the event, but wanted to make sure the numbers were such in the first years that kinks could be worked through. And organizers weren't even sure they would fill the 250 spots at first.

"It's like having a dinner party — you never know who is coming," said Barbara Henkind, the head of the Mamaroneck Schools Foundation.

Chandler Grinnell, 14, was the first to cross the finish line, in 26 minutes and 30 seconds, after tackling the longest course. His counterparts in the girls race were Jessica Damiano and Julianne Cuba, who tied to win the 13- to 14-year-old girls in 41:22.0.

Grinnell and his sister Katherine Grinnell, who won the girls 9- to 10-year-old group in 17:29, also won their age groups at the Westchester Triathlon kids event two weeks ago.

There were at least two birthday racers, as Jack Lee turned 11 and Megan Horton added 50 yards of swimming to her course by turning 9 on the day of the event. Lee finished the race in an orange cap, which made sense given that temperatures were in the high 50s as swimmers ran straight from the pool to the bike area in their swimsuits.

"I started to get a little brain freeze," Lee said.

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## Results

### Boys 7-8

1. Tyler Sakakeeny 17:33
2. Julien Aversano 19:19
3. Teddy Knowles 19:56

### Boys 9-10

1. Ryan Leblanc 17:41
2. Forrest Simpson 18:01
3. Eric Alimanestianu 18:49

### Boys 11-12

1. Robert Grinnell 27:39
2. Jake Danehy 27:54
3. Peter Conley 28:40

### Boys 13-14

1. Chandler Grinnell 26:30
2. George Sheehan 30:36
3. James Currey 32:39

### Boys 15-18

1. Brandon Fields 32:19

### Girls 7-8

1. Shari Rauls 18:12
2. Katelynn Cotter 20:15
3. Freya Cantwell 21:16

### Girls 9-10

1. Katherine Grinnell 17:29
2. Leonie Rauls 18:56
3. Morgan Stein 19:20

### Girls 11-12

1. Tanita Leary 26:03
2. Molly Cohen 30:03
3. Meaghan Fitzgerald 31:53

Girls 13-14

1t. Jessica Damiano 41:22

1t. Julianne Cuba 41:22

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