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National champ wins FIT; Sexton places second

By: Matt Long

Defending Folsom International Triathlon champion Steve Sexton enjoyed this year's race, but he would have enjoyed it a lot more had he won it.

Sexton, a 25 year old from Davis, placed second to Ben Collins, the country's amateur national champion, who completed Sunday's 15-kilometer swim, 40-kilometer bike and 10-kilometer run in and around Lake Natoma in a course record time of 1 hour, 51 minutes, 23.5 seconds.

Sexton placed second two-and-a-half minutes behind in 1:53:47.9, just 1:29 slower than last year's time, but even last year's time he still wouldn't have beaten Collins.

"It would have been nice to win; it's always nicer to win," Sexton said. "He (Collins) ran a good race.

When I heard that he was here I knew it would be pretty tough to win."

Collins, who's from Seattle and was competing in his first race in California, was quite pleased with his performance, finishing the race with his fastest time.

"It was a fun course; it was fast," Collins said. "A little wind, some rolling hills. The bike course was very smooth and well marked. The event was put together well."

Collins, 24, said the race was his last before the amateur world championships on Sept. 2. The following day he said he's turning professional and then he runs his first race as a professional on Sept. 9 in Poland.

Dominating from the start, Collins beat Sexton out the water by 22 seconds and then extended that lead by more than two minutes on the bike.

"The bike hurt a bit," Sexton said. "I lost some ground to Ben there and that's probably why it hurt."

For Collins' part, he said he all went well, despite the fact that he spent 15 minutes after the race soaking in the cool waters of Lake Natoma, as he tried to soothe his cramping legs.

"The swim felt good and I really kicked it on the bike," Collins said. "I felt I brought it home pretty fast in the run."

Collins finished the swim in 17:38, the bike in 57:31 and the run in 36:47.

Among the elite competitors, Folsom's Amity Hall, 35, was the first woman to cross the finish line, finishing with a time of 2:16:13.7. In terms of fastest times, Lynice Anderson (2:14:36) and Annie Carrino (2:15:02.1) were the top-two finishers with Hall in third.

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