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Mission Accomplished – Team Rossignol Wins Sugarbush Triathlon

Billed as the only four-event triathlon in the country, the 28th Annual Sugarbush Triathlon brought together some of the best endurance sports aficionados in the Eastern US to test their skills in this unique adventure race. The event starts in Warren, VT with a mass start 5 mile run, followed by a six mile white water paddle down the Mad River, a grueling 11 mile uphill bicycle from Waitsfield to Sugarbush Ski Area, with the final leg being a 5 kilometer cross country race up and down the alpine slopes of Sugarbush.

Over a month ago Team Rossginol's Nordic Racing and Promotions Manager, Jim Fredericks convinced three of his athletes to Team up and set a goal of achieving the fastest time in the upcoming event. With much prestige and bragging rights centered around the Sugarbush Triathlon, Fredericks' team (Team Rossignol – Howling Wolf Express) goal was not only to have the fastest time but also do it with a woman on the team and still take the whole enchilada.



JoAnn Hanowski

With overcast skies and temperatures hovering in the low 60's, Eli Enman of Huntington, VT led the charge for Team Rossi by cruising the five mile run in 26:39 and taking over a minute out of the next Team. Waiting at the boating handoff, Fredericks immediately received a shot of adrenaline seeing his teammate in a solid lead. With a clean shot on the river ahead, Fredericks' goal was to hold the lead on the river section by picking the fastest currents and avoiding the sometimes-destructive rock obstacles. Having a keen eye on obstacles while still maximizing kayak speed, Fredericks was able to lengthen the lead by over two minutes in the water.

As Fredericks charged out of the water, the next handoff was to the lone female member of the team, JoAnn Hanowski of Duluth, MN. The pressure was on Hanowski knowing that she needed to keep up her end of the goal by trying to maintain her lead against some of the top male cyclist in the region hot in pursuit. Deep concentration was a key factor as Hanowski was determined to stay small





Hanowski to Gilbertson handoff

and powerful, heading into strong headwinds on rain soaked roads. Knowing that many of the men would be eating away at her lead, Hanowski kept the pedal to the metal to hold up her end of the bargain. Half way through the course Kevin Basset of Team Ski Rack caught Hanowski and was able to make the skier handoff with a two-minute lead on Team Rossi.

With everything riding on Team Rossignol's Marc Gilbertson, the mission was to make up that two-minute lead and surge ahead on this extremely demanding course. As all spectator's eyes watched the pursuit it became quite clear that Gilbertson was definitely making up time on Team Ski Rack's cross country skier. Trudging in ankle deep wet corn snow, the final leg competitors were soon packing the course with maximum effort on the uphill and holding on for their lives on the neck breaking

downhill turns. Entering his 2nd of the three laps, Gilbertson passed the Ski Rack Team to take the lead. The only thought in his mind now was to be a little cautious on the downhill turns to avoid an impending disaster that could threaten the victory. Avoiding the spectacular crashes on every turn by many contestants, the

former Olympian from Hyde Park, VT was able to cheat catastrophe and bring home the victory for Team Rossignol Howling Wolf Express with a time of 2:07.13.



It was a maximum team effort by Team Rossi with Eli and Marc having the fastest run and ski legs of the day, Fredericks having the 2nd fastest boating time, and Hanowski having the fastest female bike leg. JoAnn also doubled on a women's 40+ age group team to have the fastest female ski leg and clinching the title for team "Shot of Espresso".

Marc Gilbertson. JoAnn Hanowski. Eli Enman. Jim Fredericks

