

SPORTS

PIRATES FOOTBALL BEGINS: FALL PLAY BEGINS

The Vashon High School varsity football team hosts Sultan at 7 p.m. next Friday at home.

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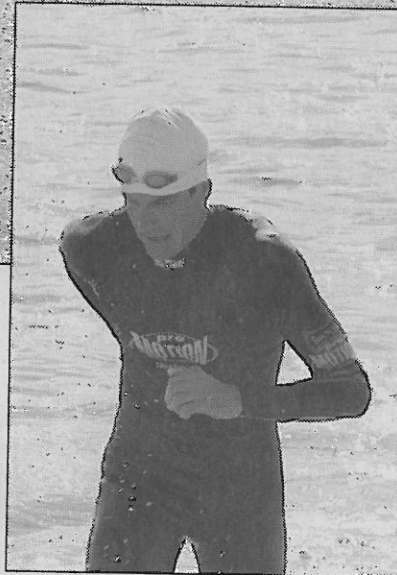
The Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber •



Rik Forschmiedt photos

Above, Laura Collins, the women's overall winner of the 2008 Heart of the Sound Triathlon, heads out on the bicycle leg. Collins completed the half-mile swim, 14.6-mile bicycle ride and 3.6 mile run in 1 hour, 37 minutes, 28 seconds.

At right, Kendall Townsend, the men's overall winner of the triathlon, emerges from the water of Quartermaster Harbor at the end the swimming leg. Townsend completed the course in 1 hour, 19 minutes, 57 seconds.



Athletes turn out in force for 'HOTS'

By SCOTT BONNEY

For The Beachcomber

An anxious ten-second countdown, a cannon blast from an offshore longboat, and the Eighth Annual Vashon Heart of the Sound Triathlon (HOTS) was under way on Sunday.

Contestants swam half a mile against strong currents, cycled almost 15 miles on a challenging and hilly bike course, and ran 3.6 miles around the Burton Loop.

"That was one of the hardest things I have ever done," said

veteran runner and first-time triathlete Cedric Gagnaire following the race. "Coming out of the water I couldn't feel my feet for five minutes into the bike course."

Top overall male finishers were Kendall Townsend, 47, of Sedro Wooley, (1:19.57), Joshua Fitchitt (1:22.10) and Scott Seamster (1:24.59).

Top women finishers included Laura Collins, 41, of Seattle (1:37.28), Stacy Munn (1:41.12) and Katie Roggenbuck (1:44.28), who was also the top Vashon

female triathlete.

Mark Ripley was the top Vashon male competitor, crossing the finish line in 1:28.46.

The "Three Amigos" team of Scott Bonney, Josh Thorn and 14-year-old running sensation Ezra Koenig were the fastest relay, finishing the three legs of the triathlon in 1:34.00.

Check out page A9 for a highlight of the kids' triathlon.

— Scott Bonney is the Vashon masters swim coach and an avid open-water swimmer.

Don't specialize

▼ Or, if you go to Los Angeles while you're looking.

Specialization in sports is a function of logic: to play any sport well, one must practice; to be competitive, one must practice often; to practice often enough to be competitive today, one must practice all year long.

Specialized athletes are palpably, measurably, objectively better than those who play everything. Vashon coaches see this whenever they bring comparable and sometimes superior kid-athletes to tournaments off-Island: we get beat like a drum, often by less-talented kids who have obviously spent more time practicing than the Island athletes did.

Times have changed. The demand on time now created by any one sport necessarily excludes play in other sports. Thirty years ago everyone knew a three-sport athlete. Gradually, there were two-sport athletes (Bo Jackson and Dion Sanders).

Today's sports stars typically never starred at anything other than their specialty: LeBron James once tried on a football uniform; Kobe Bryant played basketball and denied everything else. Whatever the cause, kids today are pressured to select one sport over others, usually by the time they are 12, sometimes at an even younger age.

Most sports have adopted and adapted to this specialization with what some call "Season Creep." Where there were once clearly defined sports seasons, today those seasons have spread like English Ivy to cover other sports, ultimately blanketing the entire year with soccer, baseball, basketball, and even lacrosse and swimming.

This creep allows for development of greater skills in a specialized sport, but it drains the pool of athletes available for other sports. This is pernicious on Vashon, since we have so few kids in the

Golfers tee off in pink 'for a cure'