Ohio State to host first beginner’s biathlon

By Greg Trauthwein
Ohio state winter

With triathlons and biathlons seeming to grow stronger and more popular with each passing year, Ohio State has finally caught on to the fad and will sponsor a biathlon. This first biathlon is being run by the Intramural Department, and will take place May 14, starting at 9 a.m.

Intramural coordinator Danell Haines, who has been competing in triathlons for six years, said Ohio State’s version is geared toward the person who has never competed in a biathlon.

“This one is geared toward the person who wants to try it for the first time,” said Haines. “That is why the distances are quite a bit less than you would regularly see in a triathlon.”

The Ohio State biathlon will consist of a 1000-meter swim in the 50-meter pool at Farkas Hall, and a 5-kilometer (3.1 mile) run on the track in Ohio Stadium. Haines said normal event lengths in a triathlon are: a 1.5-kilometer swim, a 40-kilometer bike ride and a 10-kilometer run.

HAINES, WHO averages competing in four triathlons per year, said she hopes to have a spring and winter biathlon annually, and to eventually expand into a triathlon. She cited safety considerations as her main concern in organizing a full triathlon.

“When you add the bikes, there are a lot more safety problems, such as traffic,” Haines said. “We just wanted to start out small to see how everything went.”

So far, she is pleased with the response.

Haines said any OSU staff, faculty or student may enter the event, but participation is limited to 40. At the moment, there are 54 participants registered. She also said that wheelchair participants are encouraged to enter the event.

The triathlon season is usually limited to the summer months, Haines said, because they usually involve an open-water swim, and it’s too cold any other time.

IF YOU’RE under the impression that triathlons are only for the athlete who trains all year, you’re way off base. In shorter events, like the one at Ohio State, all are encouraged to give it a try.

It seems triathlons have become popular with people who are tired of the regular grind, of any, limiting their workout to jogging.

Take for instance Mary Edwards, a senior from Aurora, who was an avid swimmer and runner in high school. She said the variety of events is the reason she became interested in triathlons.

“I like to alternate my training routine. I become very burned-out just running,” Edwards said. “But the winter in Ohio make it hard to train year-round.”

Edwards also said that a grueling class schedule has seriously cut her time available to train, but hopes to be able to pursue her athletic interests more intensely after graduation.

BARRY SMITH, a junior from Clearwater, Fla., started competing in triathlons at age 28, when his friends suggested it to him.

Before his first one, he had never been seriously competitive. His workouts consisted of long bike rides to the beach with his friends. Since then, Smith has competed in about 15 triathlons, starting out with shorter ones so he wouldn’t have to train very hard for them. But after a while, he was hooked.

“I ran about four miles a day, swam a mile a day and rode my bike 150 miles per week,” Smith said. “But when I’ve become a full-time student, I can’t really find the time to train anymore.”

Smith said short triathlons are a good idea in Ohio because they will get people interested. He admits some of the long distances in the longer triathlons would have deterred him.

“While there are two types of people who compete in triathlons, the first being the ones who like the hurricane (long and difficult triathlons) like they have in Hawaii,” Smith said. “The second group are people like me who like the shorter, faster races.”

Haines said an excellent time for a “good male” in the Ohio State biathlon would be under 30 minutes. She added that any time under 45 minutes would be very competitive.

She said the event will be run in two heats to avoid congestion. She also said she could use any volunteers willing to help, as she needs people to time the events, control traffic and work the water stand at the track.

Haines said students and other area triathletes who wish to compete can have their shot this summer, as Columbus sponsors a triathlon in June and Wend’s sponsors one in July. Haines finished first in her age division in the 1987 Wend’s triathlon.
Biathlon a success, director says

Plans to expand event next year are underway

By Greg Trauthwein
Lantern Staff writer

Ohio State's first biathlon was a smashing success according to Intramural Director Danell Haines.

"The events went as planned and the biathlon will stay basically the same for next year," Haines said. "We will definitely make it an annual event."

The event started at 9:15 a.m. Saturday. It attracted 26 participants; 18 in the men's heat, six in the women's and two in the wheelchair division.

There were 32 men signed up for the race, but in a free competition such as this, Haines said that was expected. Next year, she plans to allow more people to register in order to get a larger field.

The winner in the men's division was Gary Anderson with a time of 33 minutes and 28 seconds. Second place went to Dan Frazier (34:41) and third place to Dean Allmang (35:13).

Ann Eaton finished first in the women's division with a time of 40:51. Michelle Brussee finished second (41:57) and Nancy Lyon came in third (44:36).

In the wheelchair division, Scott Milewski finished first with a time of 1:21:37. Daphne Hill came in second with 1:29:46.

Haines felt the times in the race were very good. Before Saturday, she had said that a time around 30 minutes for the men's division would be exceptional.

Alexi Vontsolas, who finished fifth in the men's division, said he thought the biathlon was great fun.

"Cheers to Danell Haines for putting this together," Vontsolas said. "I had a fantastic time."

Vontsolas has been swimming and running with the objective to compete since January, so he can be in top form for the Wendy's and Budweiser Triathlons this summer.

Vontsolas did have some suggestions on how the biathlon could have been better.

"I wanted the swim to be longer because I'm an endurance swimmer," Vontsolas said. "The run could have been longer too."

Haines said she would like to keep the distances the same next year so those competitors will have records to shoot for.

The two events in the biathlon were a 1000-meter swim and a 5-kilometer run. The swimmers completed 20 laps in the 50-meter pool at Larkins Hall, then hurried to Ohio Stadium to complete 12 laps around the track.

Terry Beck, co-coordinator of the event, said the biathlon offered a good time for all who participated.

"The event was very well run and everyone involved was pleased," Beck said. "I anticipate the number of participants will be higher next year."

Beck credits Haines, who is an avid triathlete herself, for bringing the biathlon to Ohio State.