

# Hare outpaces field in 'ultra' triathlon

By ANGELO LYNN

MIDDLEBURY — On a drizzly, foggy morning last Friday, 11 ultra-distance triathletes slipped into the waters of Lake Dunmore at 6:30 a.m. to begin the first day of a three-day race — called Earth Journey Vermont Sun — that tests endurance more than speed.

Steve Hare, co-owner of Vermont Sun Sports and Fitness of Middlebury, defended his title by finishing first, but not by much. Hare took 23 hours, 43 minutes and 13 seconds to finish and beat second-place finisher Dick Foote of Middlebury by just over 30 minutes.

"It was brutal weather out there the first two days," Hare said.

Following either a 5.5-mile swim (which four competitors chose) or a 12-mile canoe race on Lake Dunmore, the racers then jumped on bicycles to begin a 96-mile bike trek. The racers rode in scattered, heavy rains throughout much of the ride.

Day two was also rainy and windy, which made the 168-mile bike course more difficult. That course featured climbs of 1,800, 800, 1,200 and 800 feet.

By the third day the sun was shining, but temperatures hovered in the mid-40s for the final 51-mile double-marathon. Eighty percent of the course was on dirt roads, winding through the hills of Addison County, and it included a 1,900-foot climb.

## CLOSE IS RELATIVE

While many races are won by fractions of a second, in ultra-distance events a 10-minute lead can fade quickly.

The race between Hare and Foote was close much of the way. Hare, 36, was second out of the canoe in 2:10:22, 5 minutes behind leader John Marino, 24, of Windham, N.Y., and 4 minutes ahead of Foote. At the time, Foote was in fourth place, as first-place swimmer Peter Solomon, 32, of Amherst, Mass., finished 5 seconds behind Hare.

Foote caught Solomon, Hare and Marino in the early part of the bike leg and led two-thirds of the way to the base of Brandon Gap. Hare then surged ahead, finishing the biking portion in 4:57:47, 13 minutes ahead of Foote's time of 5:10:11.

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Hare's total lead at the end of the first day was about 17 minutes, while Foote's time of 7:24:37 was good for a 10-minute lead over third-place Marino and a 20-minute lead over fourth-place Solomon.

On day two, Hare opened his lead with a powerful bike ride. He finished the course in 8:42:22, followed by Doug Dahlberg, 31, of Killington in 9:01:22; Craig Wood, 31, of Pittsfield, in 9:07:07; Foote in 9:19:35; and Solomon in 9:23:18.

With only a 14-hour rest before day three, Foote began the 52-mile

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run with a pace that worried Hare. Foote, who trailed Hare by about 54 minutes, pulled away from Hare early and at one point was gaining nearly a minute per mile. It was, however, a pace Foote could not maintain.

Foote won the running leg with a time of 7:30:47, 18 minutes ahead of Ron Hoffman, 34, of Dover, N.H., and 23 minutes ahead of Hare. That margin gave Hare the 31-minute cushion.

While the race is what Hare calls "a gut-check on your body's ability to perform over that long a distance," winning is not the goal. "It's a race, but just being able to finish at your own pace is a major accomplishment."

Of the 10 competitors in the race, seven finished. One racer didn't finish the first day's biking portion because of mechanical problems, but competed well in days two and three. Marino, the winner of the canoe leg, did not compete in days



WITH ONLY 50 more miles to run, Middlebury residents Foote, left, and Steve Hare, center, set off Sunday morning on the third day of the Earth Journey ultra-triathlon.

two and three, while Leicester resident Paul Larrow, 27, finished days one and two but opted out of day three because of muscle fatigue.

Larrow, who was listed as a two-year recreational triathlete, said it was his first ultra-distance race and he was just seeing how far he could go. He started day three, but ran only a block before thinking better of it.

The finishing times of the other five competitors were: Solomon, 26:23:59; Hoffman, 27:19:29; Dahlberg, 30:02:42; Wayne Kurtz, 25, Pittsburg, 30:14:01; Manuel Dacosta, 40, Rio De Janerio, 37:06:22.

## SWIMMING CHALLENGE

Along with the Earth Journey race, 14 swimmers challenged the 70-degree waters of Lake Dunmore for the 5.5-mile swim. Only nine finished.

The swim began on the shore of Camp Keewaydin and went the entire length of the lake to the south shore — and back. Peter Solomon won the race in 2:10:27, followed by Middlebury College swimmer Merideth Cox in 2:14:34. Cox swam without a wetsuit, which adds buoyancy and speed over such long distances. John McIntyre, 29, of Burlington, finished third in 2:15:40, followed by Fred Kniffin, 32, of New Haven. Jim Avery of Cornwall, who was the only other person to finish the race without a wet suit, finished fifth in 2:20:16. Other finishers were: Kurtz, 2:45:03; Da Costa, 2:53:08; Wood, 3:33:14; and Bruce Daly, 32, Brookline, Mass., 3:40:50.