

MORGAN HILL TIMES

Wolfsmith: Best in the fields

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By Scott Adams (sports@morganhilltimes.com)

Lance Wolfsmith took a large step for himself and one giant leap for his team in one afternoon at the Strawberry Fields Triathlon in Oxnard.

The Morgan Hill native blitzed to his first career victory at the USAT Junior Elite level, ages 16-19, Sunday, covering the 800-meter swim, five-kilometer bike ride and 20-kilometer run in an unofficial time of one hour, one minute, 47 seconds. Wolfsmith's time had to be estimated because of faulty timing equipment. He finished roughly 45 seconds ahead of Benjamin Steavenson, who took second place in 1:02:32.79.

Wolfsmith overtook Steavenson and several others for the lead during the bike split and never trailed again. He padded his lead in the run after making a smooth transition.

"When I entered the run in first place - that was a big motivator for me," Wolfsmith said. "It kept me going harder. I had a great bike and a good run. It was a good race overall."

Wolfsmith struggled with the opening swim but benefited from a long transition into biking.

"There was a lot of ground in between, and Lance was able to make up ground just by running," said his father and coach Dave Wolfsmith. "The water was rough for swimming, but he handled it well."

Steavenson, who was the lone representative of the USAT Junior Elite development team, was Wolfsmith's toughest competitor in the 21-person field. Battling closely, the two drew a dense crowd of competitors that slowly dwindled.

"They pushed the group, but they really didn't have a lot of competition," said Andy Schmitz, a USAT national teams coach. "That changed the dynamics of the race for Ben - not to take anything away from Lance."

"Lance really impressed me. He's one of the best in the nation by far. I'm excited to see how he does in a better-stacked field like at nationals or internationals."

Wolfsmith was one of three top-12 finishers for Wolfpak, joining Coto de Caza's Tyler Rodgers who took seventh in 1:07:23.27, and Morgan Hill's Kyle Benton who was 12th (1:09:21.77).

Gilroy's Matthew Sosa placed 16th in 1:11:14.36, overcoming leg cramps during the run.

"Benton and (Sosa) both cramped up - that really affected them," Dave Wolfsmith said. "You'll rarely see them give up ground in the run."

"I was proud of our team. It was a good race for them."



Morgan Hill's Lance Wolfsmith stands with Benjamin Steavenson, right, and David MacFarlane after winning Sunday's Strawberry Fields Triathlon in Oxnard.
Photo by: Special to The Times



Lance Wolfsmith won Sunday's Strawberry Fields Triathlon with an unofficial time of 1:1:47.
Photo by: Special to The Times

With their top-10 finishes, Lance Wolfsmith and Rodgers scored team points for Wolfpak, which kept alive its team title hopes heading into the Aug. 9 National Championships at Colorado Springs, Colo., the final Junior Elite Cup Series event. Lance Wolfsmith has a formidable chance of winning the Youth Elite individual title.

"If he can be a front-pack swimmer," Schmitz began, "he'll be unstoppable."

In Sunday's Youth Elite division, ages 13-15, the Wolfpak came away with three top-15 finishes. Morgan Hill's Derek Deisenroth placed 10th, covering the 400-meter swim, 2.5-kilometer bike ride and 10-kilometer run in 41:51.25; while Kyle Benton's brother Dustin Benton followed in 11th (42:24.26). Kyle Alexander of Morgan Hill took 13th place in 45:50.62.

Dave Wolfsmith's daughter Lauren Wolfsmith placed 12th (51:05.62) in the female Youth Elite competition, rounding out the Wolfpak finishers.



Morgan Hill's Kyle Benton who placed 12th in the Junior Elite division with a time of 1:09:21.77.
Photo by: Special to The Times

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