

# MORGAN HILL TIMES

## Rocky mountain highs and lows for team Wolfpak

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By Scott Adams ([sports@morganhilltimes.com](mailto:sports@morganhilltimes.com))

Misfortune reared its ugly head at Lance Wolfsmith again - and postponed the Morgan Hill native's quest for a second national title for at least another year.

In the shadow of the Olympic Training Center and alongside the nation's top triathletes at Memorial Park in Colorado Springs, Colo., Wolfsmith succumbed to harsh cramps Saturday in the USA Triathlon Junior Elite National Championship, finishing a disappointing 21st out of 50. Wolfsmith, who entered the final USAT Junior Elite Cup Series event as one of the favorites, covered the 800-meter swim, five-kilometer bike ride and 20-kilometer run in one hour, three minutes, 17.6 seconds.

"It just wasn't meant to be," the 16-year-old said Monday. "The Lord threw an obstacle at me, and I couldn't make it through."

Wolfsmith attributed his cramps to the harsh altitude of Colorado Springs, elev. 4,000-7,000 feet, but was hesitant to make excuses.

"The altitude was brutal," he said. "But I'm not blaming just that. I could have been a little smarter with nutrition supplements. It was a lot of things."

The Wolfpak frontman endured similar luck in 2007, his first Junior Elite (ages 16-19) season, when he broke a bike chain and blew a tire in separate events. That came a year after Wolfsmith won the Youth Elite (ages 13-15) national championship.

"I feel totally confident still," the Sobrato High School senior added. "I still feel like I would have won Saturday if nothing happened. I was on track, and it was turning out to be a really good race."

That all changed in the first quartermile of the run. Wolfsmith posted the fastest bike split (29:16) and was closing in on race leader Ben Kanute of Multisport Madness when the cramps kicked in.

"I thought I could fight through it," Wolfsmith recalled. "I stumbled along but had to stop 30 seconds later. It hurt so bad."

Wolfsmith wouldn't give up. After a quick chat with father and coach, Dave Wolfsmith, he continued.

"He was definitely devastated," Dave Wolfsmith said. "But he took it well afterward. A lot of people came up to congratulate him, and he congratulated them."

"He had a great race. The effort was there, but it wasn't meant to be."

Lance will get another crack next year - and against many of the same racers he saw Saturday. The Junior Elite level returns nine of the top 10 finishers, including Kanute, 16, who won in 57:05.6.

"We're excited about next year," USA Triathlon Athlete Development Coordinator Steve Kelley said. "The significant part is having a 16-year-old win it. ... There's some young talent coming back and it's a good sign for the future."



Lance Wolfsmith, left, endured harsh cramps Saturday.  
Photo by: Special to The Times

Kelley added that the championship will likely return to Colorado Springs next year.

Wolfsmith has one triathlon left this summer and can still finish in the nation's top three. He'll race in the Triathlon at Pacific Grove, a regional event, on Sept. 12.

"Saturday just made me hungrier," he said. "I'm going to train even harder next year."

Coto de Caza's Tyler Rodgers turned in a team-best finish for Wolfpak, placing 12th in 1:01:52.4. Teammate Matthew Sosa of Gilroy followed in 29th (1:04:31.6).

"(Sosa) had his best race yet," Wolfsmith said. "He did all the little things right and made quick transitions."

Morgan Hill's Kyle Benton placed 34th in 1:06:49.2, rounding out the Wolfpak Junior Elite finishers. His brother, Dustin Benton, took 24th in the Youth Elite division, covering the 400-meter swim, 2.5-kilometer bike ride and 10-kilometer run in 34:38.5. Teammate Kyle Alexander, also of Morgan Hill, placed ninth (32:33.5) in the Youth division.

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