

Braam finishes ninth in age group

By JEFF PASQUALE

The goal in an Ironman triathlon isn't to win, the goal is to finish.

And for the second time in three years, Milton's Tina Braam finished the most famous Ironman of them all, the Bud Light Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii.

"I met all the expectations I set for myself," said Braam after returning from three weeks in Hawaii.

Finished ninth

Braam finished ninth in her age group, 45-49, in a time of 13 hours and 46 minutes. This is an improvement of more than one-and-a-half hours of her 1987 time of 15.09.

"One of my goals was to beat

everyone who beat me at the qualifying race in Muncie (Ind.) and that's exactly what I did," said Braam. She also set a new family record, beating husband Ed's best time by about 10 minutes.

New family record

Ed was just great about it, no ego was involved. As a matter of fact, when I was about 1,000 metres from the finish line one of the things that helped me finish strong was Ed standing on a corner, cheering me on.

Braam improved her time in all three disciplines of the triathlon, something she is amazed at.

"I've always known running was

my strong point, I started as a runner. But it's so tough to find swimming time in Milton, I don't practice that as much as I'd like to."

Although Braam would like to attend the Ironman every year, the financial load would be too much to handle.

"I had to save for two years to afford the \$5,000 it took to go this year. Not only was I working a full-time job, but also a part-time job," said Braam, who along with Ed run the Ultrasport sporting goods store in town. "If someone came along and gave me the money I'd take it, but I'm not holding my breath. My aim is for two years down the road. You don't see a lot of 45-year-old women

with sponsorships so I'm not expecting anything."

Three events

Comparing the Ironman triathlon to those held in Milton is a little like comparing the Tour de France to a ride to the corner store to pick up a loaf of bread.

A good finishing time in what is called a short-course triathlon would be about 2 1/2 hours, while just staying in single digits in Hawaii is a major accomplishment. The Milton Triathlon consists of a 1 km swim, 40

km bike and 10 km run. The Ironman is 2.4 mile swim, 140 mile bike and full 26 mile marathon.

Braam took up triathlons in 1983 and running in 1978.

Feeling better than ever

"I feel better now than I did when I was 27. I know I'm not going to set the world on fire in triathlon, but I hope I can set an example for some of the people in town."

For Braam the traditional rallying cry of, "Wait 'til next year" is altered to "Wait 'til two years from now."

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Tina Braam looks as fresh as a daisy despite this picture being taken only minutes after she finished the grueling Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii. She had just endured 13 straight hours of competition.

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THURSDAY, NOV. 9th
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