

Xterra Temecula 5/18/08

By Tom O'Brien

As the first stop on American soil for the Xterra Championship series, Temecula has a reputation as being one of the more brutal races on the circuit. Many will tell you that it's as tough as, if not, tougher than the lava-covered World Championship course in Maui. With substantial climbing on the bike and on the run, all combined with inland California temps that usually reach the 80's this time of year, it doesn't take a first-timer long to realize that all the "hype" isn't embellishment or exaggeration.

This year brought even more of a challenge as the temperatures reached the 90's, underscoring the importance of nutrition and hydration, as well as giving a decided advantage to the Desert-Dwellers!

The Phoenix Triathlon Club was represented by three members who came out to play in the sun on this scorching day.

Debi Brokke had a solid performance as she cruised to a first place finish in the sport race with a time of 2:23:18. Debi has been a consistent performer on the Xterra circuit. Kevin Flynn experienced some back problems and was forced to pull out of the race. I'm sure we'll see him back on track shortly.

Supported team member, Tom O'Brien, who raced in the Championship race, finished 29th overall, 5th amongst Amateurs and 3rd in the 30-34 age group with a time of 2:53:47. The performance earned Tom a slot at the Xterra World Championships to be held in Maui this October.

The day was punctuated by some absolutely blazing times from the Pro field. 24 Male Pro's and 12 Female Pro's, the famous Michellie Jones being one of them, came out to show the rest of us how it's supposed to be done. South Africa ruled the day on the men's side with X-time World Champion Conrad Stoltz taking top-of-the-podium honors (2:23:02), pursued by fellow countryman Dan Hugo (2:25:20) and American Brian Smith (2:28:21). The women's race was won by the oh-so-fast Canuck, Melanie McQuaid (2:51:31). Keeping Melanie honest was Marion Summerer (2:52:58) and Jenny Tobin (2:59:48)

With the first Championship race of the year in the books, the competition heads to Pelham, Alabama for race #2.

Other local Xterra races in the area for any who might have an itch to jump over to the dirty side of triathlon include Deuces Wild in Show-Low, AZ on 6/1/08, Xterra Four-Corners on 6/7/08 in Farmington, NM and Xterra Snow Valley on 8/5/08 in Running Springs, CA. For more information on Xterra check out: www.Xterraplanet.com