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"Braun in top form at Worlds qualifier" -- Free Press story on March 7th

Braun in top form at Worlds qualifier

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By Chris Cariou

If Erin Braun can do as well in Portugal as she did in Florida, she'll be Manitoba's next world champion.

The Winnipeg triathlete, who has already qualified for the World Junior Triathlon Championships in Funchal, Portugal, May 8-9, beat all comers on the weekend at a Worlds qualifying event for U.S. athletes in Clermont, Fla., finishing about 30 seconds ahead of Manitoba teammate Amy Briscoe.

"The race went well," Braun told the Free Press yesterday from Florida where coach Gary Pallet, Briscoe and other Manitoba and Canadian triathletes are training for the approaching season and, in Braun's case, for the Worlds. "The weather didn't affect me too much until the last part of the run.

"There was one girl there who I believe came in fifth and has already qualified for the American team, and then the third- and fourth-place finishers are now going to Worlds on the American team because Amy and I were first and second. So the calibre of athletes was very good.

"So it was really good to start off my season like this."

Braun, competing in the 16-19 age category, is one of just four Canadians who'll be competing at the Worlds in that class.

For Saturday's race, the course included a 750-metre swim in a lake that was inhabited by alligators (Don't worry," Braun said, "none of them could keep up with us"), a 20-kilometre bike ride and a 5km run. Braun finished first with a time of one hour, six minutes and 49 seconds while Briscoe was less than 30 seconds behind in 1:07.18.

Other Manitobans who are part of the Manitoba Triathlon Training Centre through the Canadian Sports Centre Manitoba included Teresa Samek (14th), Carolyn Wernham (19th) and Jacques Marcoux (eighth) in their categories.

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