

Peters, Briscoe pull off duathlon double

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By Allan Besson

BLAIR PETERS didn't waste any time establishing himself on the Canadian duathlon circuit last weekend.

The 19-year-old Vincent Massey Collegiate graduate hit the ground running to beat the field in Ottawa and take the Junior National Duathlon Championship a full year before Gary Pallett, coach of the Manitoba National Triathlon Centre, had originally expected him to.

At the same time, Amy Briscoe made it a double victory for Manitoba by winning the junior women's title for the third time in five years.

The meet was a qualifier for both the 2005 world championships in Newcastle, Australia and the 2006 world championships in Corner Brook, Nfld.

"A year ago it would have been a surprise," said Pallett, as the pair worked out Thursday at Grant Park. "I knew Blair had the ability to do it. His fitness has come along a lot faster than I thought it would and his bike is stronger. He is about a year ahead of where I thought he would be."

Said Peters: "This is my first year as a junior so I haven't had that much experience racing. I was pretty surprised at how tough the competition was."

Believing he could outrun the field, Peters was happy to simply stay with the pack in the cycling portion of the event.

"I had just run a really fast 3,000 metres (8:59.80) at the high school provincials, so I knew if I worked really hard could take it," he said. "I knew if I could get the lead on the run, hang on during the cycle and get off with the pack, I could outrun them all."

Peters finished with an official time of 57:28, beating out Charley Plourde of St. Elie d'Orfor, B.C., at 57:44 and Willy Bell of Lockport at 57:46.

Breaking his time down, Peters won the five-kilometre run in 16:32 at a pace of 3:19 per km. He was fourth over the 20-km bicycle course in 32:36 at a 36.8-second pace and finished first again with a 2.5-km run in 8:22 at a 3:21 pace. Bell's times were 16:42 (3:21), 32:24 (37.0) and 8:40 (3:28).

For Briscoe, who won in 2001 and '02, it was a nice way to cap off her last year as a junior.

"I decided to work my strength, which is the cycle," she explained. "So I just hammered the bike and I was first in that, then I just held on for the run."

"We knew she was up against some pretty good runners, so she had to put it away on the bike, and she did," said Pallett. "That was great. It is good to see her come back."

Briscoe's total score of 1:06.29 gave her a comfortable victory over Kimberley Volterman of Hamilton in 1:07.55 and Sophie Trageser of Edmonton in 1:09:00. She was second in the five-km run in 19:33 (3:55), first in the 20-km cycle in 36:29 (32.9) and first in the 2.5-km run in 10:29 (4:12).

"There wasn't any point where I thought I had won it until I crossed the finish line," said the 19-year-old University of Manitoba student. "I was never sure how far she was behind, or if she was going to have an amazing last run."

Both athletes do duathlons mainly to train for triathlons and would like to do the Ironman in Hawaii at some point.

"I would like to try one, but my dream goal is really the Olympics," Briscoe said. "I did the world championships last year in Madeira, Portugal, which was my first ocean swim."

She finished in 34th place with times of 9:26 for the 750-metre swim, 50:02 for the 20-km bike, and 20:53 for the five-km run for a total time of 1:25:00.6.

Peters and Briscoe will be back in competition Sunday at the Canadian Junior and under-23 series in St. Malo, beginning at 8:30 a.m.

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