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Local crews hard at work setting up for triathlon

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There will be a lot of sleepy people in and around Annapolis tomorrow afternoon. Probably on Monday, too.



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Nearly everyone involved in the production of the inaugural Annapolis Triathlon - and there are hundreds of them - was part of a final flurry of activity prior to tomorrow's 6:45 a.m. start.

Many of the 1,500 participants arrived in Annapolis yesterday to register and pick up their race packets in the banquet facility at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

It was an appropriate site since the event, which includes a 1,500-meter swim from City Dock, a 23-mile bike ride that concludes at the stadium and a 10K run that begins outside the stadium, will finish at the 50-yard line of the football field inside the stadium.

But long before any of the triathletes arrived, members of the race committee, volunteers from the Annapolis Triathlon Club, plus a large group of merchants selling everything a triathlete's hearts could desire, were all ready to go.

Whenever organizers and volunteers talked about their schedules for the next couple of days, it was clear that sleep was not among their priorities.

That's not so true for the participants, though.

Steve Duffy, an owner of the City Dock Cafe, said he would have the popular coffee

shop open at 5 a.m. - an hour earlier than normal - to serve runners and volunteers.

"I won't be there working," admitted Duffy, who will compete in the triathlon. "I'll be trying to get as much sleep as possible."

Addie Welch will be working early tomorrow morning, too. In fact, she'll set her alarm clock for 3 a.m. and busy herself with the details of her responsibilities as "swim captain" for the event. Welch will have the first boat on the water by 5 a.m. and many others will be taking their assigned positions shortly thereafter.

"My job will be to make sure everybody that gets into the water gets out safely and has a great time doing it," Welch said. "I'll be doing everything from getting the swimmers organized before they get into the water to dealing with the people who will monitor them when they're in the water to getting them out of the water and to the transition area."

Welch noted that there would be about 30 kayaks manned by members of the Naval Academy Outdoors Club, plus Coast Guard boats, Harbor Master boats, City of Annapolis boats and four or five private power boats with radios and safety equipment to ensure the well-being of the swimmers.

The medical facility set up at City Dock will be ready to deal with any other problems encountered by participants.

Jeremy Parks, the president of the Annapolis Triathlon Club, has been getting very little sleep for quite a while and expected to get even less last night and tonight. He noted that there also will be a fully-equipped medical tent at the stadium manned by a team from Johns Hopkins.

Nina Bingham is Parks' contact with the medical units that will be on hand. She has marked possible landing areas for medical evacuation helicopters, and has recorded the exact travel times for ambulances from various spots on the course to any one of seven area hospitals.

"We don't anticipate any issues, but the person we have coordinating the medical teams is someone who has been involved in many of the major events, including the Iron Man in Kona, Hawaii," said Parks. "She's someone who plans for the worst so she can deliver the best."

Race director Robert Vigorito of the Columbia Triathlon Club has been working with the local group for about 18 months, but he has been working double-time the past few days and that will continue through tomorrow.

"I don't plan on getting much sleep between now and when the race is over, maybe three hours a night," Vigorito said. "It's not just me, it's the whole race committee and more than 400 volunteers."

Another group that arrived early yesterday and will be working non-stop until the triathlon is over is a team of 18 crew members of Race Day Films that will be making a documentary on the triathlon.

"We're making a film on the race, a two-part film," said John Stann of the filmmakers, who are headquartered in Front Royal, Va. "It will be a documentary and the people racing, the volunteers, the City of Annapolis, the surrounding area and the Annapolis Triathlon Club.

"We're also going to film the entire race course and put it on a DVD along with a USAT certified coach so it can be used as a training tool for people who might want to enter future races," he explained. "In short it will be an entire triathlon from the athletes' perspective."

ANNAPOLIS TRIATHLON

WHAT: Inaugural event sponsored by Annapolis Triathlon Club: 1,500-meter swim, 23-mile bike ride, 10-kilometer run.

WHO: 1,500 competitors – pros, amateurs; military team race; relay team race.

WHEN: Tomorrow – First wave (over-45 women, over-50 men) into the water at 6:45 a.m.; second wave (pros) 7 a.m.; seven age group waves at 5-minute intervals; final wave (relay teams) 7:40 a.m. Awards ceremony in stadium 11 a.m.

WHERE: Swim starts and finishes at Annapolis City Dock; Bike start at City Dock, through Annapolis onto county roads, ends at Naval-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium; run starts at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium into downtown Annapolis, across Severn River Bridge utilizing part of A-10 Mile Run course, ends at 50-yard line inside Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

- No Jumps-

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