

ReSport

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[Certification](#) [Events](#) [Participate](#) [Resources](#) [Media](#) [About](#)

Case Study: Keuka Lake Triathlon 2008

The Keuka Lake Triathlon took place on Sunday, June 8 in Keuka Park, NY, a small community along the western shore of Keuka Lake, one of eleven lakes making up the Finger Lakes of upstate NY. The race has been produced for a number of years, but is currently owned and organized by Score-This, a timing and race production company out of Buffalo, NY. Score-This has produced the triathlon since 2006.



The event is typically one of the first triathlons on the calendar in this region of NY. Nearly seven hundred competitors contest short and intermediate distance triathlons and a duathlon. The venue is the campus of Keuka College, a small school on the shore of Keuka Lake, and the courses pass through rural countryside. The organizers have personal interest in sustainability, and they enthusiastically sought to meet many of the CRS credits. Pre-race planning was evident, and documentation of intentions was provided well in advance of the race through the CRS certification system.

Waste

A significant effort was made to encourage recycling of cardboard, glass, plastic, metal, and paper at the event. Two "recycling stations" were created, one near registration and one at the entrance to the transition area. Separate containers for each of the recyclables were provided, with clear labels as to the contents of each. Two 8' x 3' banners were allegedly printed to identify the stations, but they were not brought to the race and therefore were not used.

Athletes had difficulty placing the correct items in the correct containers. Some effort was made to redistribute, but dedicated volunteers are required for this job or it gets unwieldy quickly. By the end of the race, most containers did not hold their intended materials.

The organizers are allowed to use dumpsters at Keuka College for trash, so it is difficult to determine how much waste was generated by the triathlon. Pre-race plans indicated that two volunteers would weigh the trash before adding it to the dumpster, but a late-day thunderstorm may have scuttled those intentions.

Climate

Event organizers use the registration system from One Million Revolutions to enroll participants. Thus, a built-in carpool module and carbon offset component allow Score-This to satisfy several credits. The organizer's website describes the carpool module and how to use it, and it appears a few participants were interested. Results of a post-event survey will indicate how successful the outreach was.

In addition to using the carbon offset module, Score-This has committed to offsetting all participants' emissions times two through credits purchased from CarbonFund.org. A receipt checked against participant data will verify the purchase.

Score-This did not fully understand the scope of Credit 2.8, as they intended to offset the travel of their employees and event staff to and from the race. Though this is part of the total carbon footprint generated by the event, the actual total includes far more sources and was not calculated.

Materials

Score-This is an event production company, putting on many events throughout the year. Thus, they own most of their equipment and use it repeatedly throughout the season, and from year to year. They also rent their equipment to events utilizing their timing services, furthering its use.

Finisher medals are not provided to all finishers. Instead, first-time participants are recognized with a small medal at the awards ceremony.

The post-race meal is provided by Keuka College through its dining services. Though waste items like napkins are not composted, the utensils and dishware are washed and reused. The Keuka Lake Triathlon makes very good use of existing infrastructure and services at the college, which is otherwise not in operation during the summer.

Community and Outreach

Though Score-This is based in Buffalo, its relationship with the Red Cross of Yates County ensures a local partnership that gives back to the community meaningfully. Staff from the Red Cross are part of the organizing committee, and a financial donation is made after the event each year. CRS considers the Red Cross a charity, not a "community asset" like a bike trail or park.

Along with use of Keuka College's dining services and trash disposal, the event also made low-cost housing available to participants through the college dormitories. This provided an alternative to hotels for out-of-town visitors, and allowed reuse of an existing piece of infrastructure (the dormitories).

Score-This administered a recycling program for old sneakers and cell phones at the event. Response was good - many athletes brought their old items to the race, where they could drop them off at the volunteer tent. Pre-race announcements told athletes of the program through the Score-This website and newsletters.

By using the registration system from One Million Revolutions, the Keuka Lake Triathlon was able to engage the public in sustainability initiatives through the carpool and carbon offset modules.

Health Promotion

Most Score-This events allow a wide variety of athletes to participate, and the Keuka Lake Triathlon was not an exception. Participants could choose among short or intermediate distance triathlons, a duathlon, an aquabike, or compete as part of a relay. A non-competitive kid's race allowed youth to participate, and it was held toward the end of the morning races to allow athletes and spectators to watch without distraction.

A pre-race clinic was held to introduce new athletes to the sport, and medals were presented to first-time athletes to signify their accomplishment. Several press releases were submitted to local media outlets describing the event and its benefits to health and the local community, but it is not know if they were run.

Score-This intends to send a post-race survey to participants via email. An expected 90% of participants will be queried, and the response rate will be requested.

Innovation

Three innovation credits were requested: collection of a financial donation to the Yates County ARC, old sneaker return for recycling, and cell phone recycling through the Yates County ARC. Verification of these intentions is needed before credits can be awarded.

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