

TRAVERSE CITY RECORD-EAGLE

SPORTS

TODAY'S SPORTS HIGHLIGHTS

NFL
Detroit at Chicago, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Green Bay, 4:15 p.m.
Auto Racing
Sylvania 300, 1 p.m.

INSIDE:
Cardinals clinch
NL Central title
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Sunday, September 18, 2005

SECTION D

CYCLING

Tour de Leelanau rolls through

Wisconsin man wins inaugural 77-mile race

BY MIKE TERRELL

Special to the Record-Eagle

PESHAWBESTOWN —

The first Tour de Leelanau rolled across the county's scenic highlands Saturday much to the delight of both specta-

tors and riders in this version of a classic European road race.

Nick Reistad, a 22-year-old from Wisconsin, riding for the Advantage Benefit Team, won the 77-mile men's road race in a tight sprint at the finish line, and so did the women's champion, 26-year-old Grand Rapids resident McKenzie Woodring, also riding for Advantage. Both won with less than a two-second advantage over

their next two competitors.

The women's race covered a little over 53 miles. The men's race started in Leelanau and the women's race started in Glen Arbor. It ended at the upper level Eagle Ridge Convention Center at the Leelanau Sands Casino, the races' major sponsor.

After the grueling race, which climbed more than 3,400 feet over the length of

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A group of racers come into Cedar in the inaugural Tour de Leelanau on Saturday.

Record-Eagle/Douglas Tesner

RACE

Sprints decide Tour de Leelanau

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the course, the hardy riders had one more hurdle at the end. The finish line was located off M-22 another 200 feet higher than Peshawbestown and 500 meters up the road to the conference center.

"I looked at that last hill, and, not knowing the course, I went for broke," said Reistad. "Fortunately, it wasn't too long and I held off the second and third place riders. We had broken away from the pack on the last big hill and were sprinting to the finish line."

Robert Herriman, the third place finisher from Royal Oak, was less than two seconds behind the leader, Jason Swaitowski of Grand Rapids finished second.

"I didn't expect the group to stay together for the whole race, but they were still tightly grouped with about 10 miles to go," said the 45-year-old, who was competing in just his second road race of the season. "Others had been leading up to that point, but the three of us sprinted to the front and held the lead until the finish."

A pack of 40-some riders crossed the finish line within just a few minutes of the lead men.

The women, who started about 20 minutes behind the men, finished the race remaining about the same time behind their male counterparts. It was a similar experience with the top three female riders sprinting ahead of the rest of the pack for a tight finish among the trio.

Woodring nosed out Julie Bellerose (24), from Ann Arbor, and Aiemece Vasse (27), from Tucson, Ariz., finishing less than two seconds ahead of her rivals.

"It was a tough, difficult race," said the female winner. "We had given it all at the end, and it was just who could charge up that last hill climb the fastest. I saw Aiemece stand up in the saddle, and so did I. It was an exciting finish."

"That last power climb got me at the end," added Vasse. "I couldn't hang with McKenzie. She's awesome."

Like the regular Tour de France there were races within a race. In addition to seeing who can survive the rigors of cycling through the hilly Leelanau countryside for three to four hours with frequent climbs of 300 to 400 feet, points were awarded for sprint races and certain hill climbs. Additional prize money was rewarded in each competition for both men and women. A total cash purse of \$10,000 was distributed to individual riders.

Sprint competitions, sponsored by Advantage Benefits, were held in Maple City (women), Glen Arbor (men) and for both sexes in Cedar, Lake Leelanau and Suttons Bay. Riders reach speeds of 30 miles per hour as they battle for position elbow to elbow and wheel to wheel. Overall sprint winners were Dave Sachs, from Grand Rapids; and Woodring.

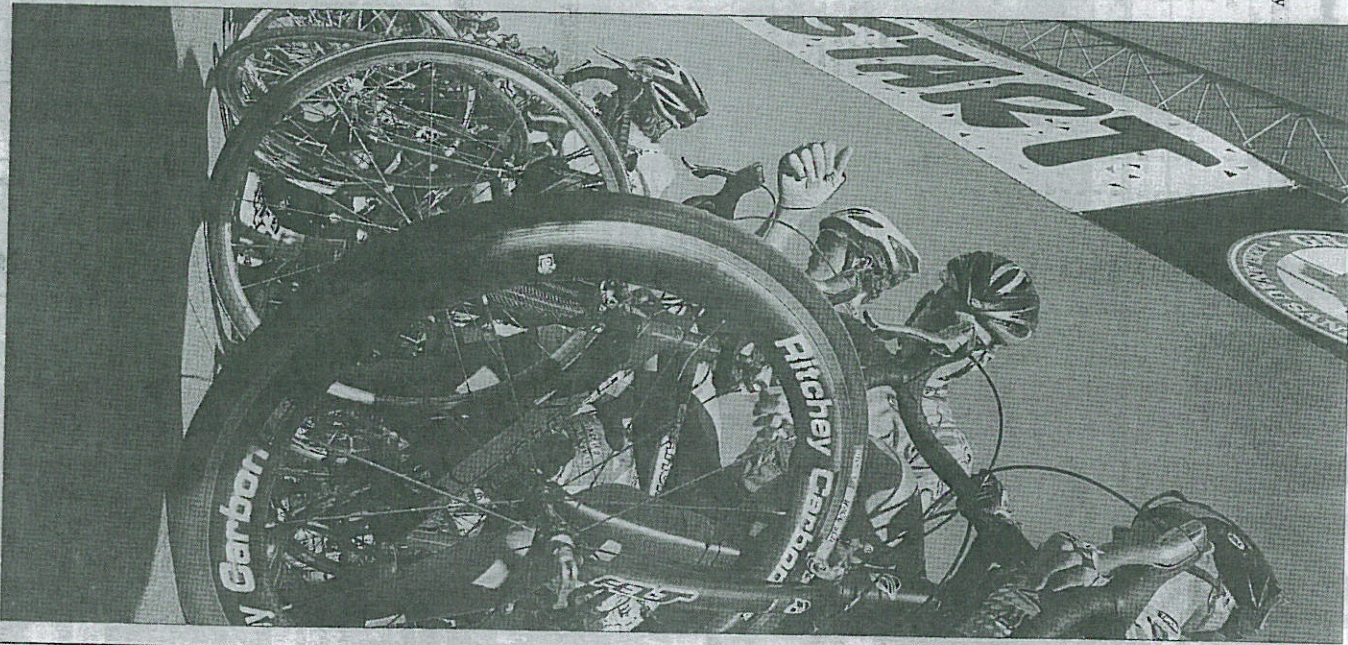
King of the Mountain hill climb points were awarded for key climbs on Hayka Road, Inspiration Point, Lakeshore Road, Herman Road and Dumas Road; all certified leg breakers, according to race organizer Steve Brown. Overall KOM winners were Arne Hinrichsen, from Germany, and Susan Schuebel, riding for McLaren Cycle.

Jeff Cook, from Elk Rapids, the top local finisher placing sixth in the men's competition and just a couple of minutes off the winner's pace, was complimentary of the course and race organization.

"It was an excellent race and the crowds were amazing all along the course," said the 34-year-old, who just won the state championship road bike race a week ago downstate. "In all the little communities and at all the road crossings people were out cheering us on. This race is just going to keep getting bigger. It's an awesome road course."

Bill Morrison, president of the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, was pleased with the overall success of the inaugural event.

"When we went to Steve Brown and asked him to put this race on, this was just what we hoped would happen," he enthused. "People are coming out to watch, and it's helping to fill our little communities this weekend. This is exciting. Within a couple of years we hope to attract European riders to this event. I think it can grow that big."



Riders prepare for the start of the inaugural Tour de Leelanau on Saturday morning.

Record-Engle/Doug Tesmer