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## Hurd claims duathlon crown

### Westerberg breaks Larsen's record in World's Toughest Half

By Todd Mordhorst, Journal Sports Editor

The lure of a national championship brought Justin Hurd back to his home state this weekend. A clash with Joe Thorn helped push him to his goal.

Hurd won the Auburn International Duathlon Sunday, winning the U.S. national championship in the process. He crossed the finish line in 4 hours, 34 minutes, about eight minutes ahead of World's Toughest Half triathlon winner Staffan Westerberg.

Hurd grew up in the tiny town of Brownsville and was an NCAA All-American in the steeplechase at UC Davis. He's now an elite triathlete, but he entered the duathlon event Sunday to pursue the national crown.

"I was debating on whether to do the tri or the duathlon," Hurd said. "With it being the national championship, that's why I ended up doing it.

"Joe (Thorn) was pushing me hard. It was not comfortable."

Hurd and Thorn took a wrong turn at the beginning of their 56-mile bike ride, but recovered and remained ahead of the pack for the entire race.

On the run, Hurd took command, winning by four minutes over Thorn.

"I actually like running uphill," said Hurd, who works as a technician for the Heart Center of the Rockies in Fort Collins, Colo. "I do a lot of hill training in Colorado.

"I really liked the run. It was really scenic."

Westerberg broke Steve Larsen's course record by six minutes Sunday in the World's Toughest Half. The engineer from Mountain View trailed Australian Mick Cupitt for much of the race, but on the 13.1-mile run he hit his stride and cruised to the win.

"It went really well today," the 34-year-old Westerberg said. "I had a great swim and just drafted off the lead guy.

"The bike was really hard. A couple guys took off and went ahead of me, but I tried to just keep my pace. On the first lap of the run I caught (Kupic)."

Australian Kat Baker won the World's Toughest Half with an impressive time of 5:07. She was seventh overall and just 25 minutes behind Westerberg.

The 22-year-old is spending the summer in the U.S., trying to make a living as a professional triathlete.

"It's my second year as a pro and it's going pretty well," said Baker, who was competing for the first time in five months after suffering a hip injury. "It's hard, but it's been a lot of fun."

Mary Chandler won the women's duathlon to claim the national title.

In the Auburn International Triathlon, which consisted of a 1.5K swim, 40K bike and 10K run, Kyle Leto dominated, winning in 2:04:48. Australian Melissa Vandewater was the top female in 2:20:42.

John Christopher was the winner of the inaugural Auburn International Sprint Triathlon, completing the 500-meter swim, 13-kilometer bike ride and 5K run in 1:03. Margot Cutter won the women's crown in the sprint event, clocking in at 1:13:00.

Auburn's Robin and Troy Soares raced to first place in the competitive mixed relay of the World's Toughest Half For complete results, visit [www.capitalroadrace.com](http://www.capitalroadrace.com).

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