

Grit Races Successfully Launches with Inaugural Huntington Sprint Triathlon

BAY VILLAGE, OH, UNITED STATES, June 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After nearly a decade away, one of Northeast Ohio's favorite sprint triathlons returned to Huntington Reservation on Sunday as Grit Races successfully revived the Huntington Sprint Triathlon.

Grit Races successfully hosted its inaugural event on Sunday, June 28, 2026, welcoming nearly 240 athletes to the Huntington Sprint Triathlon at Huntington Reservation in Bay Village. The event marked the official debut of Grit Races, drawing competitors from Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and one participant all the way from Australia, for a morning of fast racing and ideal conditions along Lake Erie's shoreline.

Athletes competed in a classic sprint-distance triathlon consisting of a 750-meter swim, 13.1-mile bike ride, and 3-mile run. Weather conditions were nearly perfect for racing, with temperatures ranging from 67 to 73 degrees, light 2.5 mph winds, and calm waters that helped create an outstanding race experience.

Painesville's Johnny Delbalso claimed the inaugural Huntington Sprint Triathlon overall title, crossing the finish line in 1:02:43.25, narrowly beating Westlake's Derek Stone by less than 1 minute, with a time of 1:03:34.23 for second place. Cleveland's Michael Houdek was third with a



Swimmers at the 2026 Grit Races Huntington Sprint Triathlon



Participant on the bike course at Huntington Sprint Triathlon

time of 1:06:52.26.

Becca Schulte of Cleveland Heights captured the overall female award, finishing in 1:10:02.44. Micaela Gonzalez Kail of Broadview Heights finished in the second place overall female spot in 1:15:41.29, while Kaitlin Switzer of Defiance rounded out the women's podium in 1:17:54.18.

The Huntington Sprint Triathlon brought together athletes of all experience levels, from seasoned triathletes chasing podium finishes to first-time competitors crossing the finish line in their first multisport event.

Participants were greeted by enthusiastic volunteers, scenic views throughout Huntington Reservation, Bay Village, and Avon Lake neighborhoods, and an energetic finish-line atmosphere that celebrated every participant's accomplishment. The final two finishers, Cindy Wildman and Frank Bigowsky, crossed the finish line, grabbing hold of each other's hands in unison, representing the community these athletes have to support one another across the finish line.

"The Huntington Sprint Triathlon represents exactly what we envisioned when creating Grit Races," said Melanie Prohaska, Co-Owner and Race Director for Grit Races. "Seeing athletes from multiple states come together to compete, challenge themselves, and support one another made this an unforgettable first event."

As its inaugural race organization, Grit Races is committed to delivering quality events that provide exceptional athlete experiences while offering an inclusive and welcoming community. Sunday's successful debut lays the foundation for future races that inspire athletes of every ability to pursue their next finish line.

Overall Men's Results

Johnny Delbalso (Painesville, Ohio) – 1:02:43.25

Derek Stone (Westlake, Ohio) – 1:03:34.23

Michael Houdek (Cleveland, Ohio) – 1:06:52.26

Overall Women's Results

Becca Schulte (Cleveland Heights, Ohio) – 1:10:02.44

Micaela Gonzalez Kail (Broadview Heights, Ohio) – 1:15:41.29

Kaitlin Switzer (Defiance, Ohio) – 1:17:54.18



Volunteer handing runner Gatorade at the Huntington Sprint Triathlon

Building on the success of its inaugural event, Grit Races plans to bring the Huntington Sprint Triathlon back in 2027. Additional details, including the 2027 race date and registration information, will be announced in the coming months through Grit Races' official communication channels. Athletes are encouraged to stay connected for updates and opportunities to be part of the next chapter of this growing event. The next event on the Grit Races 2026 event calendar is Tri CLE Rock Roll Run, slated for August 16, 2026.

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About Grit Races: Grit Races is a Cleveland-based multisport events company dedicated to building community through safe, inclusive, and professional race experiences. Founded in 2026, Grit Races is committed to growing multisport events across Northeast Ohio and beyond. Its premier event, Tri CLE Rock Roll Run, has earned national recognition and hosts more than 1,000 athletes annually. Learn more at GritRaces.com and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok.

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