

Del Rosso Is Double Winner, Hillard Takes Downtown Dash On Successful Day At Criterium

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Austin Del Rosso was a double winner on the day, winning both the men's Category 5 bike race and the Downtown Dash foot race, while Laura Hillard on St. Louis City was the women's winner of the Downtown Dash on a very successful day at TheBANK Of Edwardsville/Busey Bank Edwardsville Rotary Criterium Festival Saturday afternoon and evening on the streets of downtown Edwardsville.

The tenth annual festival is a series of bike races, combined with the Downtown Dash foot race, which is a two-lap event ran on the same course as the bike races, with the climax being the Pro Category 1 and 2 race that started at 9:35 p.m.

It was a sunny and very warm day for the races, and with the crowds growing as the day went on, including many families. In addition, local bars and restaurants were open for patrons to enjoy dinner and drinks while the races were in progress.

“We were blessed with good weather for the set-up,” said Criterium director Brian Mulhill in an interview during the early part of the day, “we got set up on time, we got the course at noon, and we had racing ready to go with five minutes to spare, and we're just really thrilled with so many great volunteers that put everything together to get us started.”

Mulhill was looking forward to the pro races, when the crowds would be at the biggest of the day.

“When you get into the women's pro race, and the men's pro race, I think that's when the crowd swells to its biggest size,” Mulhill said, “and you've got your fastest and most skilled athletes. It's also at night, so that adds a little bit of intrigue and excitement to the event. So those will take place after nine o'clock.”

One of the biggest highlights of the day was the kids races, where kids from one to 11 raced by age groups and were also introduced in a grand parade. Mulhill always looks forward to the kids races.

“Oh, yeah. In fact, personally, it's my favorite moment of the whole event,” Mulhill said, “to see those little ones, and the not so little ones, because there's up to 11-year-olds that race in it. But it just warms my heart, it really does, to see future generations have the opportunity to participate in something like that in their hometown, and they're going to remember that, they really will. Most of them remember that the rest of their lives, that they were able to race up and down Main Street for an event like this.”

In addition, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, the famous Olympic gold medalist from East St. Louis who was named by Sports Illustrated as the greatest female athlete of the 20th Century, was on hand to be the honorary starter for both the kids races and the

Downtown Dash. Joyner-Kersee also presented the medals to the top three finishers in the Dash.

“We’re excited to have her to signal the start of the Downtown Dash,” Mulhill said, “which is at six o’clock. And to have a four-time Olympic qualifier, eight-time medalist, four-time gold medalist Olympian here today, probably the greatest female athlete of all-time, is quite an honor for us.”

In early results of the bike races, the juniors 9-18 race was won by Hayden Zenor of University City, Mo., with Asa Child of Ashland, Mo., coming in second, and Nicholas Gomes of Florissant, Mo., finishing third. The women’s Category 4 and 5 race was won by Alison Mundell of Lousiville, with Claire Reinbold of Kirkwood, Mo., coming in second and Laurie Elmore of Carmel, Ind., placing third.

In the men’s Masters 40-and-over race, the winner was Keith Guilford of Edwardsville, with Joseph Skrocki of China, Mich., the runner-up, and Justin Kirk, also of Carmel, Ind., coming in third. In the Masters 50-and-over race, it was Chris Harre of St. Louis winning, with Patrick Gribbon of Wildwood, Mo., coming in second and Chris Kroll of Montgomery, Ind., placing third. Del Rosso was the winner of the men’s Category 5 bike race, but results of the other bike races were unavailable at press time.

In the men’s Downtown Dash race, Del Rosso won the men’s title with a course record time of 6:14, with Caleb Emerton of St. Charles, Mo., coming in second with a time of 6:23. Third place went to Drew Mueller of St. Louis, with a time of 6:32, Justin Wieduwilt of Collinsville came in fourth at 7:01, and Charlie Gentemann of Marine was fifth, with a time of 7:42. The top four finishers all broke the course record set in last year’s inaugural race.

In the women’s Dash, Hillard won the event with a time of 7:30, with Mary Kronable of Godfrey coming in second at 8:20, Tanya Colbert of Edwardsville was third, also at 8:20, Lory Cooper of St. Louis came in fourth with a time of 9:02, and Rebecca Hostettler of Edwardsville was fifth, coming in at 9:32.

In the men’s age groups, the nine-and-under winner was Gus Range of Edwardsville, with a time of 8:44, the 10-14 winner was Gentemann, Adam Aguinaga of Wood River won the 20-29 category, coming in at 8:07, Wieduwilt won the 30-39 age group, the 40-49 winner was Rance Olliges of Glen Carbon, with a time of 7:52, Tom Schalk of Edwardsville was the 50-59 winner at 8:48, and the 60-and-over winner was Wayne Skigen of Edwardsville, who had a time of 9:19.

In the women’s age group races, the nine-and-under winner was Lydia Manthei of Glen Carbon, who came in at 9:44, the 10-14 winner was Madison Popelar of Edwardsville at

9:47, the 20-29 champion was Mia Frank of St. Louis, who had a time of 10:27, Cooper took the honors in the 30-39 group, Shona Quick of Bethalto won the 40-49 race, coming in at 10:45, it was Erica Hunt of Edwardsville winning the 50-59 category at 10:26, and the 60-and-over winner was Martha Spillers of Edwardsville with a time of 16:31.

The presence of Joyner-Kersee added to a very successful day of racing.

“I just encourage people to come out, enjoy the social aspect of the event,” Mulhill said, “and appreciate the amazing skills that these riders have, and they’ll showcase for everyone that’s out here.”







[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)