

# Aaron Beebe Wins Main Event Race As Edwardsville Rotary Criterium Festival Is Another Rousing Success

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Aaron Beebe won the main event race, the Pro Category 1/2/3, at the BuseyBank Edwardsville Rotary Criterium Festival bicycle road race series, held Saturday afternoon and evening in the heart of Downtown Edwardsville.

The 12th annual event was another rousing success for the racers and fans, as the sidelines were packed with spectators who were both enjoying the races and partaking in the entertainment zone, with music, food and beverage trucks and good company all throughout the event. And the weather was good throughout, save for a brief shower that hit the area during the seven p.m. hour.

"I don't think it could be going any better," said festival director Brian Mulhill. "We've dodge some weather, looks like we might dodge it the rest of the night, too. Set-up was stupendous, over three hours, 170 volunteers will be here today, we have record sign up for the racers, pre-registration and we might beat our all-time record for racers. Fourteen states so far represented for the racers' sign-up."

Or as the public address announcer always calls the kids races, "the greatest race in the world." It's a big moment for the racers and one of the most popular events on the day.

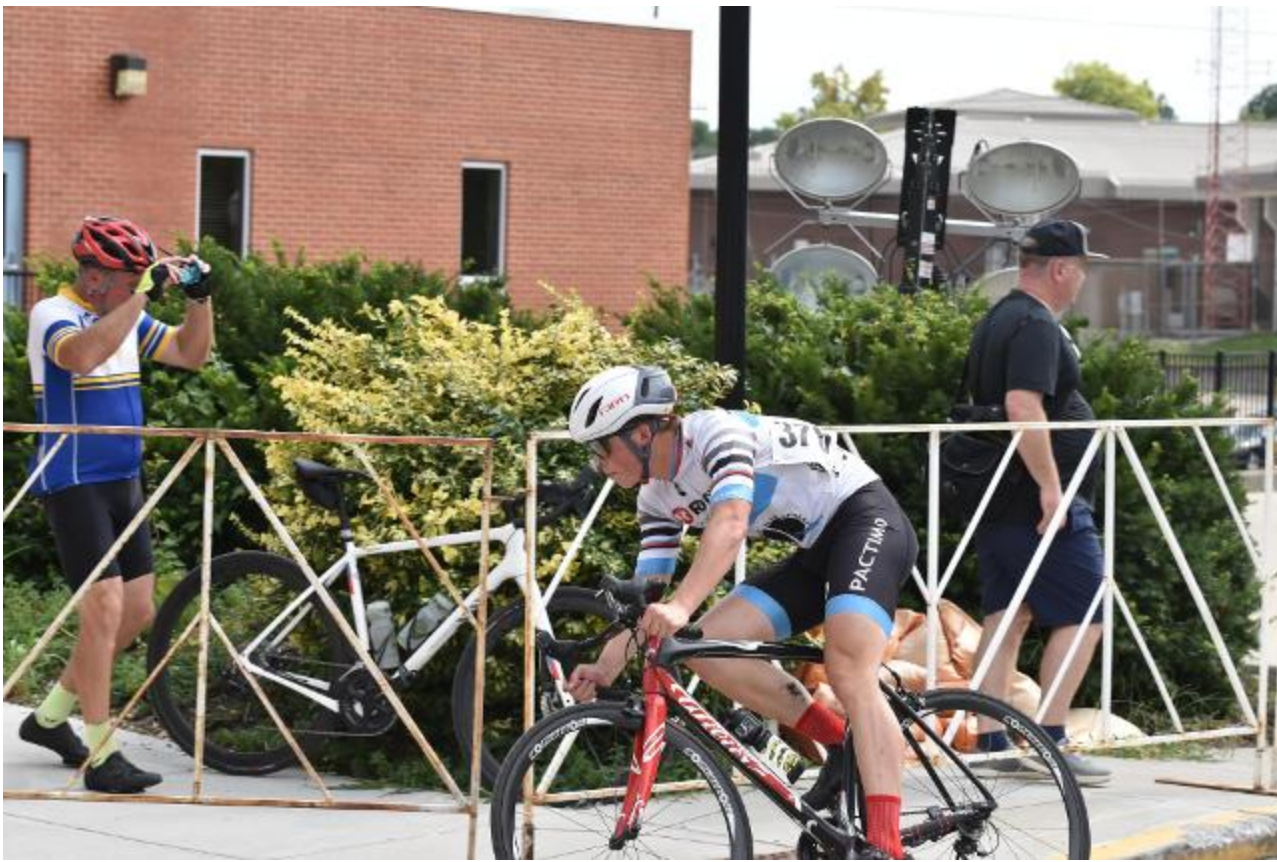
"It's lasting memories," Mulhill said. "You get five, six, seven years old, you remember things in your life that were pretty special. And to be able to say you raced down Main

Street with thousands of people watching you and you're talking to other kids from, you know, like when you're in college and talking with someone, they said 'you did what?' You said 'yeah, we did it every year in our community.' They say 'man, we would have loved to have done that. We have nothing like that.' So, it's great. And Rotary is big for youth services, it's one of the avenues of service for Rotary. So, we'll support the kids forever."

For the entire event, if there was one phrase that was prominent, it was "safety first."

"Well today, safety, first and foremost, for the racers, for the volunteers," Mulhill said. "And we provide it. Plenty of water and ice and fans at the tents. So, first and foremost, it's safety. No accidents. The racers will occasionally get a spill and they're used to it. It's what they do. You get a lot of road rash, you get some broken collarbones and you're hoping that's the worst that it ever gets. But as I look at the rest of the day and we put things together and call it a night, I'm driving home, I just want to know did everyone have a really great time and did everyone stay safe? And if that took place, then I'm pleased."





The opening races were among junior riders, with Nolan Schmeider taking the nine-to-12-year old race, Maddox Simmons winning the 13-and-14 year old event, the 15-and-16-year old race was won by Emily Homage and the 17-and-18-year-old race went to Logan Baugh. The Masters B 50-plus race was won by Michael Wilkening, and the 60-plus category's winner was won by Kent Lewis. The women's Category 3/4/5 race was won by Jordan Gweyn Austin, with Teague Hansen winning the Category 4/Novice race. Jacob Linn took the honors in the Category 3.4 Novice event, which was followed by the kids races, where the winners were --- everyone who participated in The Greatest Race In The World.

The Downtown Dash foot race, a two-lap run on the Criterium's course, followed, with the men's winner being Tyler Hiserote of Maryville, formerly of Peoria, with a time of 6:59, with second place going to Adam McLean of Edwardsville, in at 7:85, veteran racer Justin Wieduwilt of Collinsville was third at 7:34. fourth place went to Jeff Price of Edwardsville at 7:45 and rounding out the top five was Andrew Hessell, also of Edwardsville, at 7:47.

The women's winner was Stephanie Pruitt of Bunker Hill, with a time of 8:57, with Rebecca Bradley of Edwardsville coming in second at 9:32, Amelia Hill of Edwardsville came in third at 10:33, Meacey Hessell of Edwardsville was fourth at 10:40 and Cara Kielty of Edwardsville rounded out the top five with a time of 10:51.

The bike races concluded with Arielle Coy winning the Women's Pro/Open event, with Beebe taking the main event race.





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