

Scott County Reserve Deputies Compete in Iron Cop Triathlon

By Ron Plante, Scott County Sheriff's Reserve

Three members of the Scott County Sheriff's Reserve competed in the 2009 Iron Cop Triathlon to support a Cedar Rapids officer injured in the line of duty. Reserve Deputies Gwen Aleksiejczyk, Ron Plante, and Dave Mathews joined 30 law enforcement personnel in Cedar Rapids for a shoot, ride, and run competition on June 13th.

Iowa DCI Special Agent Don Schreffler started the Iron Cop Triathlon in 1998 with three goals: Organize an athletic event for police officers; organize a public event to show officers in a positive light; and organize a charity event for a worthy cause. Although a triathlon typically begins with a 600-yard swim, Don replaced that with a shooting event, thus encouraging more officers to participate. Iowa Trooper Matt Schwenn, the 2002 champion, took over as Iron Cop director in 2004.

The event was held at the Cedar Rapids Police Department range, where participants began by firing 50 rounds from their duty handgun on a standard course. The next stages were timed, starting with a 15-mile bicycle ride immediately followed by a 5-kilometer (3.1 mile) run. Although some agencies formed optional three-person teams, most officers competed as individuals.

Gwen Aleksiejczyk and Ron Plante competed in the previous Iron Cop supporting the Children's Miracle Network, but this year was a first for Dave Mathews. Dave admitted it was hard, saying "I did a lot of running in jump school and I've done some biking, but not much of either in recent months. Combining the two was rough." Dave did exceptionally well on the range, however, scoring 249 out of 250 points and just missing the tie-breaker "shoot-out" among five perfect scorers.

Although this was her second Iron Cop, Gwen agreed the event was challenging. "Fifteen miles is a long ride for me," said Gwen, noting that "My legs had just gotten used to pedaling when it was time to run. The transition is hard."

After the event, the Scott County team joined participants from around the state for a cook-out and

awards ceremony. Gwen took first in her age group, and all three won door prizes. "It was primarily full-time officers," said Gwen, "But there was a reserve officer from Polk City. We're hoping more reserves turn out next year. Sure, we may not be as fast as the younger officers, but we still have fun."

All three Reserve Deputies intend to participate in next year's Iron Cop Triathlon. Speaking for the team, Dave Mathews said "I enjoyed doing something for Cedar Rapids Officer Tim Davis. Whether next year's event supports an injured officer or another charity, we'll be there on June 12, 2010." www.ironcop.org

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Suggested caption for attached photo 1153:

From left to right, Scott County Reserve Deputies Ron Plante, Gwen Aleksiejczyk, and Dave Mathews are shown before competing in the 2009 Iron Cop Triathlon.