

The Virgin Islands Consortium

The Triathlon Is Back On St. Croix, Albeit In Different Form

Sports / **Published On December 03, 2018 12:35 PM /**

Staff **December 03, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Athletes from abroad and many from at home on Sunday participated in what was St. Croix's 30th annual triathlon. The event has always been a tourism booster for the island, and many have expressed delight in its return after it was announced that the [May 7, 2017 race would be the last](#).

But while the triathlon is back, the race is no longer a qualifying event as with past years. Because of this, top athletes around the world who in the past have descended on St. Croix to be part of the competition, called the Iron Man 70.3 in its heyday (even Lance Armstrong participated once), no longer journey to the island for the event, a reality that has taken away much of the race's allure.

The setbacks, however, were not enough to dissuade members of the [VI Tri](#) group from putting on the event this year.

Dubbed "Beauty and the Beast", Sunday's race offered a long distance course, sprint, and for the first time, a sprint aquathlon, according to information found on the race's website. Relays were offered in the long distance course and sprint triathlon races. (Find all results of Sunday's race [here](#).)

Dedrick Luikens, who came in second in the sprint category, said he was pleased that the triathlon was active again. "I think it's very important to the island. When I first moved here 8 years ago, the whole streets were filled with people, and it used to be a huge event. I'd like to see it get built back," Mr. Luikens, a physician, said. "It's good for the economy, it's good for the community and the money that goes to charity. Every little bit helps."

Dominic Pugliese, a 17-year-old Crucian who placed first in the sprint, also spoke of the race's importance to St. Croix. "St. Croix really needs this and we're so happy to have all these people, and I know it's going to get a lot bigger next year," he said. "I'm really happy that we have great people to come and support this race. It really means a lot to me and I'm sure it means a lot to the people who came down to be part of this race on our very beautiful island."

Funds raised as part of Sunday's race will go towards helping the St. Croix Animal Welfare Center, My Brother's Table and the Caribbean Centers for Boys & Girls of the Virgin Islands -- all of which were affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.