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# SPORTS



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# OVERCOMING ANXIETY

After shark attack,  
fewer entering races

**By Don Norcross**

STAFF WRITER

ENCINITAS — Longtime triathlete Christy Criley tried persuading a friend to enter his first triathlon this weekend in Encinitas. The guy was on the fence, until Solana Beach's Dave Martin was killed by a great white shark three weeks ago.

"Nope, that's it. I'm out," the friend said.

The third annual Encinitas Sports Festival features two sprint-distance triathlons Sunday, which will mark the first open-water competitive swims in the county since Martin's death.

Entries for the races are down more than 16 percent, from 900 to almost 750. Organizers and triathletes agree the shark attack has played a factor, but how much so, given the region's sagging economy, is difficult to determine.



**Swimmers, such as these at the 2002 Ironman in Oceanside, will hit the ocean Sunday in the Encinitas Sports Festival.** *U-T file photo*

Race co-director Paul Huddle said he has answered at least half a dozen e-mails from prospective participants concerning sharks. Among the questions:

- What are you doing about the sharks?
- Are there sharks present?
- How deep will the sharks be?

An avid paddleboarder and surfer, Huddle is empathetic toward the questioners, although he knows how rare it is for sharks to strike humans.

According to the International Shark Attack File in Gainesville, Fla., the most recent fatal shark

**SEE Triathlons, D2**

## ► TRIATHLONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE D1

# Shark victim's kin will race

attack in San Diego County was June 14, 1959.

"There are some nervous people who are asking questions that are either obvious or can't be answered," Huddle said. "If you think about it logically, the chances of another attack are infinitesimal. But it's hard to be logical when you hear great white shark."

Jeff Martin, David's 41-year-old son, and Tanner Martin, his 9-year-old grandson, will be among the athletes racing Sunday. Jeff will be shadowing his son Tanner in the mini-sprint triathlon, a 375-meter swim, 10K bike race and 2½K run.

Jeff Martin raced his first triathlon two years ago, entering a two-person relay with his father, who had been competing in the sport for a couple of years.

Sunday's race will be Tanner's second triathlon in two weeks. He was granted an under-age exemption at the Mission Bay Spring Sprint Triathlon.

"I think Tanner feels a sense of honor doing this," Jeff said. "He's kind of carrying on the legacy."

Tanner will wear No. 451 for the race, the same number his grandfather wore for the event last year.

A longtime surfer, Jeff Martin already has returned to the ocean.

## ENCINITAS SPORTS FESTIVAL

### TOMORROW

**6-8 a.m.:** San Diego Century Bicycle Tour, three courses: 37 miles, 66 miles and 103 miles.

**8 a.m.:** 5K and 1K Run/Walk, Moonlight Beach.

**8:30 a.m.:** Moonlight Beach Paddle, Oceanside Pier to Moonlight Beach, 11 miles.

### SUNDAY

**6:45 a.m.:** Sprint Triathlon (.75K swim, 20K bike, 5K run).

**7:40 a.m.:** Mini-Sprint Triathlon (.375K swim, 10K bike, 2.5K run).

**8 a.m.:** Duathlon (1-mile run, 10K bike, 2.5K run).

**8:30 a.m.:** Moonlight Beach Swim, 1 mile.

### INFORMATION

[www.encinitasrace.com](http://www.encinitasrace.com); (760) 634-4100, ext. 104.

He thinks his father's death was a freak accident. By participating in Sunday's triathlon, he feels he's honoring his father's love of the sport and demonstrating that he's not letting the accident alter his lifestyle.

"I'm a pilot," said Jeff, who flies for Alaska Airlines. "I'm often asked, 'Aren't you afraid to fly?' Planes crash and when it happens it's big news because it's so rare. Shark attacks are big news because they're so rare."

"I understand eight people have died in the state by shark attacks. Then I wonder how many people in San Diego last weekend alone died of a car accident. But I don't think anyone's driving around scared. Yes (a shark attack) could happen.

But it's so rare."

Yet the fear factor is out there.

Despite having raced triathlons for more than 20 years without an aquatic scare, Crilley admits, "I would be lying if I said I didn't have anxiety."

Crilley has not been in the ocean since David Martin's death.

"I'm really pushing myself hard to (race)," Crilley said. "I don't want to do it, but it's not going to stop me from racing Sunday. Dr. Martin (a veterinarian) would want all the racers to go back in the ocean. Plus, I would be setting a poor example for my son."

Crilley registered her 10-year-old son, Chad, for a junior lifeguard program before Martin's death. After the attack, Chad said he wanted



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to back out. Crilley is insisting that he participate in the program.

Said Crilley: "As a parent, that one's tough. But you can't live your life in fear. That's my philosophy in life. You have to go on, march on, even after a tragedy."

Terry Martin Duvel is one of San Diego County's most respected triathletes and triathlon coaches. She once finished 14th overall at the Ironman World Championship in Hawaii. As an amateur, she has won her age group multiple times at Kona.

She's the head triathlon coach at UCSD's masters program. Martin Duvel admits the events of three weeks ago will be in the back of her mind when she wades into the water off Moonlight Beach on Sunday.

"I think once the gun goes off and you start swimming with hundreds of others, you're going to forget about it," she said.

Added Rancho Santa Fe's Kate Major, who has finished third three times at Kona and will be racing Sunday, "At some stage, you've got to get back in the water and not let that deter you from swimming in the ocean."

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