

In the News

USA Triathlon Selects Great River Medical Center as First Regional Training Site

February 1, 2006 – USA Triathlon, the governing body for the multi-sport of triathlon in the United States, has selected Great River Medical Center as the organization’s first regional training center. The hospital is the only training site in the country besides USA Triathlon’s Colorado Springs, Colo., headquarters.

“Our partnership with Great River Medical Center gives USA Triathlon the ability to promote a dynamic facility to help drive many of our initiatives that can be used by and benefit our constituents,” said USA Triathlon Executive Director Skip Gilbert. “It will provide us with significant ammunition to fuel the multi-sport lifestyle and grow our respective sports.”

Triathlon is an endurance race combining three consecutive events. The events and Olympic distances are swimming (0.9 miles), biking (24.8 miles) and running (6.2 miles). Triathlon made its Olympic debut at the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, Australia.

As a regional training center, Great River Medical Center will work with athletes from throughout the Midwest who are interested in becoming competitive triathletes or those already involved in the sport who would like to progress to a higher level. Great River Medical Center also will conduct coaching clinics for those interested in working with triathletes. The hospital has already hosted two such clinics in the past two years. Two coaching clinics are scheduled at the hospital in 2006: a Level I clinic from May 12 to 14, and a Level II clinic from Sept. 7 to 10.

In addition, the hospital will continue to work with Team BEAST (Burlington Endurance Athlete Sports Team), a triathlon training club sponsored by Great River Medical Center and the Burlington Area Community YMCA-YWCA. The club currently has more than 30 members ranging in age from 15 to 74. This summer, Team BEAST will host the Lake Geode Challenge, an Olympic-distance triathlon scheduled Saturday, July 15, at Geode State Park, near Danville, Iowa. Great River Medical Center is the primary sponsor of the event.

In the near future, the hospital will conduct camps to help increase the number of youth and age-group athletes participating in triathlon and to identify talent for USA Triathlon’s Athlete Development Pipeline program. The purpose of this program is to increase the talent pool available to fill USA Triathlon’s national teams and, ultimately, vie for spots on the U.S. Olympic Triathlon Team.

Most of the regional training center services will be provided through Great River Center for Rehabilitation, a comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation facility located on the hospital’s campus. Athletes also may use the running and swimming facilities at Burlington Area Community YMCA-YWCA, Burlington Community School District and Southeastern Community College.

“We have nine staff members at the hospital who are USA Triathlon-certified coaches, and they are the primary people who will work with athletes using the training center,” said George Van Hagen, a certified Level II USA Triathlon coach and a physical therapy assistant at Great River Medical Center who spearheaded the effort to designate the hospital as a regional training center. “The center also offers the services of a psychologist with special training in sports psychology and a licensed, registered dietitian with special training in sports nutrition.”

Other available clinical/athletic services include:

- Cardiopulmonary reconditioning
- Exercise physiology
- Exercise reconditioning and stretching
- Human performance testing (isokinetic testing, muscle imbalance identification, strength testing, oxygen uptake analysis, VO2Max, lactate threshold, gait/movement analysis)
- Injury treatment (balance, flexibility, range of motion, strengthening)
- Massage therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Pain management
- Personal training
- Physical therapy
- Water therapy
- Wellness coaching
- Wound care

“Receiving the first regional training center designation is a tremendous accomplishment for the hospital and all of the staff who have worked so hard over the years to make this a reality,” said hospital President and CEO Mark Richardson. “We’re looking forward to not only working with the athletes, but also helping improve the overall health of the area by raising awareness of the benefits of exercise and proper nutrition.”

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