



Missouri State Trooper Drowns Training for Triathlon

Fayetteville, AR – June 24, 2013 - The Ozark Valley Triathlon was cancelled Sunday, after a Missouri Highway Patrol Sergeant, training for the competition, drowned at Lake Wedington.

Emergency crews responded to the lake Saturday afternoon, after a man in distress went underwater.

"Some of the swimmers saw him and tried to help him and he disappeared under the surface," said Sergeant Ti Augustine with the Washington County Sheriff's Office.

Dive teams searched and recovered the body of 43-year-old David Finley, a Sergeant with Missouri State Highway Patrol's Troop G.

"They came out and dove in the water for several hours until they did find a victim."

Several triathletes traveled across state lines to compete, and were shocked to find out the drowning victim was one of their own.

"You prepare the best you can and we try and make sure that we're up on our swimming, but sometimes things are just outside of your control," said triathlete Katrina Menard.

According to officials, Finley drowned while training for the Ozark Valley Triathlon.

"It's always tragic when it's one of our own who dies, and so we trust that the race director made the best call concerning the circumstances."

The event, scheduled for Sunday, was cancelled by the U.S. Forest Service.

"I found out in a message actually this morning that was forwarded to me by my teammates. They got the email and the text that it was cancelled," said Menard.

A post on the Ozark Valley Triathlon website explained why the race would no longer take place and sent thoughts and prayers to the victim's family.

"It's tragic nonetheless when any drowning occurs, even when it's a fit individual, some things just happen."

So several triathletes took to the trails Sunday morning and completed the bike ride in honor of their fellow competitor.

"It's never an easy thing to deal with, but we feel for them and our condolences go out to them, said Menard.

The triathlon was scheduled to have a 1,000-yard swim, 19-mile bike ride and a 4-mile run.

