

Alcatraz 'escape' to Alameda cop

Special to The Examiner

If some of the guys who tried to flee The Rock when it was America's toughest prison had possessed the skills of entrants in the Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon, they might be alive today to tell the tale.

Yesterday's gruelling event, held as a fundraiser for the Dolpin Swimming and Boating Club, was won by Norman Lapera of Castro Valley — an Alameda policeman — in 4 hours, 14 minutes and three seconds.

It involved a swim from the island to the Hyde Street pier in The City, a bicycle race across the Golden Gate Bridge to Mill Valley, a run over Mount Tamalpais to Stinson Beach along the Dipsea trail and — gasp, gasp, gasp — a return along the same route to the finish line in Mill Valley.

Second was Roger Major of San

Francisco; third was another San Franciscan, Gary Mulder; and Tim Sweasey of Pinole, one of the favorites, wound up fourth.

First woman to finish was Susanna Spencer-Horner of San Francisco. The first male over 40 to tour the course was Brock Settlemeier of Piedmont. Jack Bettancourt, 52, of South San Francisco, was the oldest male to complete the test while the oldest woman was Elaine Pedersen, 44, of San Francisco.

Sweasey would have finished higher had he not blown a bicycle tire while peddling across the bridge. With the help of two female passersby, he was able to repair it and continued on, but he lost 20 minutes because of the mishap.

The other favorite, Rich Harley of Daly City, one of the top rough water swimmers in the area, was the first to reach San Francisco from Alcatraz, making it across the Bay in 35 minutes. However, about a mile along the Dipsea trail heading toward the beach he tripped, sprained his ankle and had to drop out.

Forty three entrants started the triathlon, but only 32 finished. Most of the dropouts, according to triathlon spokesman Dr. Paxton Beale, came in the swimming phase when they were unable to conquer the tides to make it into the Hyde street pier.