

Recovered and ready to compete

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Kevin McCaffrey watched his kids run ahead of him on a family vacation in Washington, D. C. His days of running marathons, triathlons and iron man competitions were already five years behind him that day. McCaffrey, 53, of Allendale, could not even walk a few blocks.

"I felt like an 80-year-old man," the lawyer said, adding that he knew he needed surgery at that moment.

McCaffrey entered a triathlon just eight months after his second hip replacement surgery. He said he had never expected to compete again, but just wanted to run and bike with his sons, ages 9 and 12.

He competed in the 28th Annual Wyckoff-Franklin Lakes Triathlon last month after recovering from surgeries performed by fellow triathlete Dr. Gregg Klein at the Hartzband Center for Hip & Knee Replacement LLC in Paramus.

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"It felt good to give a guy back his quality of life," said Klein, who competed in the triathlon with McCaffrey. "The 'thank you' that you get from a patient like that is really rewarding."

McCaffrey recovered quickly, Klein said. He walked the day after surgery and ran a 5K with his sons four weeks later. McCaffrey said being able to participate in that race made the whole medical procedure worthwhile.

'Too young' for wheelchair

His 30-year racing history did not prepare him for last month's event, he said.

"I was nervous about being able to finish it," he said. "It felt like I was doing it for the first time again."

McCaffrey said he did not feel any pain after the race.

He learned of his chronic arthritis after struggling during a marathon in 2003. The pain was not too much to handle at first, he said.

"I finally hit that point that it was affecting my ability to walk and climb stairs," he said. "I was just too young to go in a wheelchair."

McCaffrey said he was pleased to finish the race, but he wants to improve during his next triathlon in September.

"I was happy with the results, but I also left it feeling like I could have done so much better," he said.

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