



Ironman UK takes Bolton by storm as more than 1600



WINNING DEBUT: Philip Graves on his way to victory in Bolton's first Ironman UK event

Graves dream

Student has a to win town's

by Nick Jackson

YORKSHIRE student Philip Graves had a fairytale start to his Ironman triathlon career with a win in the first event ever to be held in Bolton.

The 29-year-old York history undergraduate beat off a strong challenge from last year's IronmanUK champion Stephen Bayliss, who finished only three minutes behind his rival.

Graves edged the opening 2.4-mile swim at Rivington Reservoir before the gruelling 112-mile bike section in which the youngster was able to stretch his lead over the 30-year-old champion to seven minutes.

Although Bayliss — who won last year's event, held at Sherburne, Darset — trailed Graves in towards the end of the 26.2-mile marathon, it was the York man who took the acclim of the vast crowd on

Victoria Square in front of Bolton Town Hall, finishing in eight hours 44 mins and 52 secs with Bayliss's time 8:48:30.

The exhausted youngster saluted his rival as well as the Bolton public and admitted the difficult course had taken its toll.

"It thought I'd gone too hard on the bike," he said. "I was absolutely in pieces. I thought 'I don't know how I'm going to manage this run'."

"But I just put my head down and had to get on with it. I saw him behind me. There were a lot of sections where we were doubling back. He (Bayliss) is good down hill and the last part of the course is downhill so I was having to push really hard."

"I came into the race with the



Pictures: Steve Holt, Karen Hope and Maurice Jones

EARLY START: Competitors file into the Rivington Reservoir at 6am for the start of their swim



PEDAL POWER: Competitors in action at Rivington