

Age Triumphs Over Experience

Two years ago, Nelson's Cameron Jones became the youngest ever finisher of the Fine Signs Crazyman. Today the talented 17-year-old overcame a top field and tough conditions in the Capital City to become the youngest ever winner.

Established in 1991, the Fine Signs Crazyman has long been a proving ground for future champions. A look through the Hall of Fame at Crazyman.kiwi reveals a who's-who of the sport. World champions Steve Gurney, Kristina Anglem, Jill Westenra, Emily Miazga, Fleur Pawsey, Gordon Walker, Jesse Simson and Richard and Elina Ussher have all won the annual Hutt City event.

But never has the Fine Signs Crazyman been won by one so young, and yet the manner in which Cameron Jones took the title was even more impressive than his tender years.

Namesake and two-time Crazyman champion, Dan Jones, was the odds-on favourite. But in wild conditions on Wellington harbour the favourite failed to fire and it was previous third placegetter, Dan Busch, who took an early lead.

Busch is a master in the boat and opened six minutes over fellow Nelsonians Patrick Higgins and the younger Jones. 2012 winner James Coubrough was next, with Dan Jones back in eighth.

It was on the 28k mountain bike up the Hutt River Trail and over Belmont Regional Park that the eventual winner made his move, recording a fastest ride to take a three-minute lead into the final 13k trail run through Korokoro Stream to the finish on Petone Foreshore.

With a smile a mile wide, the 17-year-old added to his lead to cross the line five minutes clear in 3hrs 48min 01secs.

Jones led an onslaught of Nelsonians across the line as Dan Busch held on to second place from fast-charging Patrick Higgins, who finished just 26secs further back. But more than just fellow Nelsonians, these three are training partners and even travelled across to the Crazyman in the same van with Cameron Jones father supporting crewing them all on race day.

While pre-race favourite, Dan Jones, was unable to continue his winning ways at the Crazyman, he did manage to notch up the fastest run and nab fourth place. And his cousin also kept the family flag flying.

Fellow Whakatane native Corrinne Smit was simply too classy in the women's race. Leading from start to finish, she was a massive 27min clear when she stopped the clock at 4hrs 32min 32secs.

In tough conditions an intriguing battle developed for the minor placings among women. New Zealand triathlon rep, Deb Lynch, had to put her swim skills to good use to recover from an early dunking in the rough kayak conditions. But she recovered to lead

experienced multisporter Kath Kelly into the mountain bike. Kelly fought back to lead Lynch by six minutes going into the run. But Lynch proved the fleetest of foot among all women to pass Kelly for second place.

Wellington's amazing run of weather ended on the start line of the 28th Fine Signs Crazyman as high winds and a choppy harbour tested more than 200 participants.

Local plods, Daniel Bremner, Wade Jennings and Ian McCallum were equal to the challenge though. The boys in blue named their team "Po-Po" and duly broke the corporate team record with 3hrs 57min 20secs.

Similarly, Lizzy Bunckenberg and Sarah Riceman proved equal to the test, shrugging off the conditions to miss the womens team record by just three minutes when winning in 4hrs 43min 45secs.

In the duathlon option for non-kayakers Porirua's Ryan Corke made it a day for teenagers, although he didn't have it easy. Corke held just one minute over Lower Hutt's own Stephen Butler after the mountain bike. Both men threw everything at the run, but Corke prevailed to add 19 more seconds to win in 2hrs 37min 16secs.

Contrasting the young bucks at the front, 54-year-old Wellingtonian Andrew Wheatley claimed third overall among Duathletes when winning his masters men category in 2hrs 51min 18secs.

The womans duathlon was a hard-fought affair, with just 10min separating the top three as Wellington's Ruth Rothman held off Angela Roche (also Wellington) in 3hrs 14min 49secs, while Greymouth's Katie Smith ran through the field to nab third.

Mountain bike standouts Kim Hurst and Marg Leyland joined forces to win the women's team duathlon, with Hurst breaking her own record in the mountain bike section (using a cyclo cross bike) while Leyland swapped bike for shoes to lead them to the win in a new record of 2hrs 51min 16secs.

Father and daughter duo. Gary and Mary-Anne Moller, were popular winners of the mixed team duathlon in 2hrs 54min 05secs.

The Hutt City Crazyman is one of New Zealand's longest-running multisport races. Established in 1991, this year proved somewhat unique with the event being run on its traditional date back in May and then again today in December when organisers have decided to position the event in the future.

For full results visit www.crazyman.kiwi.