

South Islanders Go Crazy In The Capital

South Islanders took the spoils at Wellington's premier multisport race today as more than 300 people shrugged off a misty but mild day in the Capital for the 24th Hutt City Crazyman.

Finnish-born star, Elina Ussher, raced to her fourth Crazyman title. The Nelson-based professional won here in 2006, 2007 and 2011. But her return in 2014 was something of a debut, because the 38 year old was racing the Crazyman's new route for the first time.

On a course that is as spectacular as it is challenging, competitors from all ends of New Zealand lined up for the 13k kayak, 30k mountain bike and 13k trail run. The current route across Wellington Harbour and around Belmont Regional Park was established in 2012 and despite leading from start to finish, Ussher admitted to this win was as challenging as her previous three.

"Oh, you Wellingtonians know how to make hard races," she said after winning the 56k race around the Hutt Valley's iconic outdoor elements. "It was a nice course and the run was really beautiful, but that mountain bike might be the hardest I have done in a multisport race."

Elina Ussher



The 38 year old had to work hard on the opening kayak section from Eastbourne's Days Bay to Petone as young Wellingtonian Lizzy Bunckenberg held her to just two minutes as Ussher clocked the fastest female kayak time at 1hr 14min. But once onto mountain bikes Ussher made the race her own and was able to enjoy the final run down Korokoro Stream to the finish at Petone Wharf.

At the finish Ussher stopped the clock at 4hrs 48min 06secs, with the 21 year old Bunckenberg second in 5hrs 18min 25secs. Wellington teenager Rachel Baker broke her own junior women's record by nine minutes with 5hrs 55min 17secs for third ahead of Rosi Zeiske.

The men's race was similarly one-sided as Wanaka's Dougal Allan also led from start to finish. The 29 year old was taking on the Hutt City Crazyman for the first time but despite not having seen the course he led from start to finish to set a new course record of 3hrs 47min 35secs.

Wanganui kayak specialist Aaron Cox was only 32 seconds adrift after the kayak section. But Allan is arguably the strongest cyclist in the sport and clocked the fastest mountain bike section at 1hr 40min 38secs.

New Zealand triathlon rep Martin van Barneveld did well to lose only 10min to Allan on the kayak and was

expected to give chase on the mountain bike and run. And van Barneveld did give chase, moving from 10th to second. But in conditions made tougher by rain and low mist, Allan was in his element and continued pulling away to beat van Barneveld by 27min. Behind them Liam Drew (Wgtn) ran past Aaron Cox (Wang) to nab third and first veteran in 4hrs 27min 20secs.

In other racing, locals James Coubrough, Dougal Thorburn and Stephen Day shaved nine seconds off the race record for the multisport team race with a time of 3hrs 50min 45secs, which was consolation to Coubrough who lost his individual record to Dougal Allan.

The multisport mixed team was dominated by one family as Diane, Ryan and Hannah Corke romped away for a 17min win in 5hrs 29min 27secs. Wellington veterans Les Morris, Dave Wallace and Dave Heatly defended their veteran team title, 1min 50secs ahead of second placed Dave Rudge, Barryn Westfield and Paul Chaplow.

The duathlon racing for non-kayakers provided some of the day's most impressive racing with the mixed team of Shailie Sanbrooks and Laurence Pidcock (Wgtn) and a women's team of Kim Hurst and Amy Champion (UH) beating finishing first and second.

Patrick McKenna and Jacqui O'Hagan won the individual duathlon titles, with McKenna passing national mountain bike rep Brendon Sharratt on the run to win by three minutes in 2hrs 58min 22secs. O'Hagan clocked 3hrs 43min 35secs to beat Hamilton's Joanna Chalmers and Lower Hutt's Kylie Feyen.

The Hutt City Crazyman is one of New Zealand's longest-running multisport races. In 2015 it will celebrate its 25th anniversary race, which is scheduled for Sunday 3rd May.

Dougal Allan

