

Repeat Offenders Go Crazy

A year ago, Nelson's Cameron Jones and Whakatane's Corrinne O'Donnell confirmed themselves as the fastest improving talent on the national multisport scene when they totally dominated Wellington's Fine Signs Crazyman. This year they illustrated an ability to shrug off pressure when both returned to take out the Capital's premier multisport race for their second consecutive year.

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.

Some won the Crazyman after their world titles, but for many it was part of their journey to becoming world champions, and both Jones and O'Donnell look destined for that same journey.

A year ago, Jones had become the youngest ever winner of a major multisport race. Still only 18, he was even more impressive this year. Whereas a year ago, he had to ride through the field for the win, this year he led from almost start to finish.

Wellington Harbour was picture-perfect for the 13k kayak from Eastbourne across to Petone. Jones came off the water tracked closely by Edgumbe's Thomas O'Donnell, the husband of eventual women's winner Corrine. But the Nelson teenager was all alone after that, opening up 10min on O'Donnell during the 28k mountain bike up the Hutt River Trail and over Belmont Regional Park.

Little-known New Plymouth teenager, Calum Sutherland, also stormed through the ride to pass O'Donnell. But Jones was undeniable and added to his lead during the 13k Trail Run down Korokoro Stream to eventually win in 3hrs 46min 15secs.

The women's race took a similar tack, with Corrinne O'Donnell closely tracked by Wellington veteran Vicki Vertongen during the kayak. But once on mountain bikes, the 28 year rode away to a 10min lead that she

extended on the run to win by 19min in 4hrs 45min 21secs.

The race for runner-up was closer, with Vertongen seeming sealing second with a strong ride only to have Wellington's Kathryn Bunckenberg storm through the run to claim second place, 3min clear of Vertongen.

Warm conditions and light winds made for hot racing. In other racing, Lizzy Bunckenberg was involved in another winning women's multisport team, this time with national triathlon rep Deb Lynch.

In the duathlon option for non-kayakers Wellington doctor, Dougal Thorburn took his third win in six years, this time five minutes clear of local veteran standout, Patrick McKenna.

Among female duathletes, Mary-Anne Moller was a popular winner. A year ago she won the duathlon team title with her father, Gary. This year she won the solo race in 3hrs 15min 05secs, winning 13min clear of Lower Hutt's Kirin Fahey.

The duathlon teams was won by teenager Max Wickins and Matt Cryer in 2hrs 30min 25secs. The women team duathlon saw Rhonda Gardner and Karen Nunns by 18min in 3hrs 22min 58.

The Hutt City Crazyman is one of New Zealand's longest-running multisport races. More than 200 lined up for the Lower Hutt event, including athletes from as far afield as Taipei. Local stalwart Les Morris, who has done all 29 Crazymans to date, was racing again and hopes to have at least one more year in him.

For full results visit www.crazyman.kiwi.

Young guns Cam Jones & Calum Sutherland

