

Crazy New Talent Shines at Crazyman

Since 1991, the Hutt City Crazyman has been a bleeding ground for many of the sports stars. Past Crazyman winners such Richard Ussher, Emily Miazga, Gordon Walker, Elina Ussher, Nathan Fa'avae, Kristina Anglem, Steve Gurney and Jill Westenra all went on to win world titles. This year's winners illustrated the potential to do the same.

Twelve months ago no one had heard of Luke Osborne or Jesse Simson. But the Hutt City Crazyman was the latest success for the sport's fastest rising stars.

Simson, from Wanaka, burst onto the sport late last year with a surprise win at the Waikaremoana Challenge ahead of Coast to Coast champion Elina Ussher. That was her first multisport race and her second was a race record in the Two Day Speight's Coast to Coast.

Osborne, from Hastings, also came to notice at the Waikaremoana race, finishing a close fourth behind Dougal Allen, Richard Ussher and Trevor Voyce, all three of whom have been first and second at the Speight's Coast to Coast.

In perfect conditions at the 23rd Hutt City Crazyman, Osborne started as favourite but had to play catch-up after Wellington's Tim Sutton opened up a two minutes lead on the 13k kayak across a glass-like Wellington Harbour. But the 29 year old Osborne went straight to work on the mountain bike, passing Sutton as they began the 5k long slog up Boulder Hill to finish the challenging 30k course through Belmont Regional Park with almost 20min minutes in hand.

The Crazyman's scenic tour of the Hutt Valley's iconic outdoor attractions finishes with a 13k trail run through the stunning Korokoro Dam area. Osborne sealed his win here with a 1hr 12min run that saw him cross the finish line on Petone Foreshore with almost half an hour in hand in 4hrs 06min 46secs. Behind him, Tim Sutton held out a strong finish from fellow Wellingtonian Blair Simpson to hold on to second place by less than two minutes in 4hrs 35min 40secs.

Not far behind these lead men, Jess Simson was even more impressive, leading from start to finish to finish fourth overall among individual multisporters.

As expected, the former Department of Conservation concessions officer had five minutes up her sleeve after the opening kayak section. But an expected challenge from up and coming Wellingtonian Fiona Dowling on the mountain bike and run sections didn't eventuate. Simson, however, was incredibly strong, clocking 2hrs 07min for the ride and then 1hr 18min for the 13k trail run

to break Jill Westenra's course record by seven minutes with 4hrs 41min 01secs.

Forty minutes behind Simson, Fiona Dowling made up for her bike woes with a solid run to claim second ahead of Upper Hutt's Annabel Ramsay. But almost overlooked was veteran woman's winner Mary McBride, who was consistent across all three disciplines to be the second woman overall in 5hrs 10min 20secs.

More than 300 endurance junkies from all ends of New Zealand lined up for the 23rd Hutt City Crazyman. Highlights included second placed Tim Sutton being upstaged by his father Peter, who at age 62 finished third place in the 50-plus category and was the eldest individual finisher. And Wellington's Moller brothers, Bruce, Gary and Gordon, took their fifth straight veteran team title at the Crazyman, while at the other end of the scale the future looks bright after five teenagers took on the feature multisport individual event.

Jess Simson

