

## Something Old & Something New At New-Look Crazyman

Almost 400 endurance junkies from all ends of New Zealand lined up on a picture-postcard day for the 22nd Hutt City Crazyman. And while the pre-race favourites dominated, a new course took everyone pleasantly by surprise.

Land owner issues and rising costs of compliance for things such as traffic management forced organisers to break from 22 years of tradition to an almost entirely new course in 2012. The opening 13k kayak section was similar, paddling in reverse from Eastbourne to Petone across the eastern bays of Wellington Harbour. But the mountain bike and trail run sections shifted from the Hutt Valley's eastern skyline across to the western slopes of Belmont Regional Park, with the mountain bike taking in the 442m high Boulder Hill and the run taking in the stunning Korokoro Dam area.

*Jill Westena*



At age 47, the 1999 Crazyman champion and four-time Coast to Coast winner Jill Westena showed she's game for new challenges. 2010 Crazyman champion, Helen Chittenden (Nelson), was game throughout. The 37 year old held Westena to just over a minute on the kayak, but Westena pulled away steadily the rest of the day to finish seven minutes ahead in 4hrs 48min 30secs.

The racing among men panned out similarly with pre-race favourite James Coubrough using hometown advantage to good effect for a 17min win ahead of Picton's Dan Moore and Wellington newcomer Andrew Bevins.

Coubrough and Moore have been two of the fastest-improving

multisporters on the national scene in recent years. Both had previously finished second at the Crazyman and in 2011 Coubrough beat Moore when winning the Speight's Coast to Coast Two-Day race.

At the Crazyman Coubrough was a class above. The former New Zealand mountain running rep is renowned for his fleet of foot, but he's also a keen white water kayaker and more than capable in racing boats where he opened up five minutes on Moore. Moore is at his best on the bike, but could only pull back half a minute on Coubrough. No one was going to match Coubrough on the run and he added a massive 11min to stop the clock on Petone Foreshore in 3hrs 48min 52secs.

*James Coubrough*



Behind Coubrough, Moore was 16min ahead of up and comer Andrew Bevins and national rep mountain biker Rodney Gordon. Alexandra's Shaun Portegy was the first veteran in fifth overall in 4hrs 25min 27secs.

In other racing local mountain bike standout Alex Revell dominated the duathlon option in 3hrs 43min 24secs, with his bike/run effort being comparable to Coubrough's. Among women Roxburgh's Kath Kelly held out Wellington's Fiona Dowling by two minutes in 3hrs 31min 41secs.

Among teams Porirua's Marianne Archer and Wellington twins Sally and Helen Anderson claimed their fifth consecutive women's team title, with Archer showing the way by finishing finishing fourth overall in the opening kayak section.

While Coubrough and co were impressive, however, further back in the field several locals were

making Crazyman history. Dave Rudge won the masters men (50 years+) among multisporters, but as one of the original event founders in 1991 he became the only person to have raced the Crazyman's three different formats over the 22 years.

The Crazyman started out in 1991 as a two-day race that also included a road cycling section on day two. In 2000 increasing traffic management and land issues saw the event shortened to just the first day. Now the new course includes some of the old day two route. Lower Hutt's Marco Renalli knows all three routes intimately. The 56 year old has raced the Crazyman more than anyone else, finishing 21 of the 22 editions to date.

Thirteen year old Wellingtonian Thomas Newmann looked as fresh as a daisy when he became the youngest ever Crazyman finisher in 6hrs 25min 47secs. But 40 minutes earlier Lower Hutt's John Wood had finished the 56k race in 5hrs 46min 13secs to become, at age 72, the oldest ever Crazyman finisher.

Wood, another who lives right next to the Crazyman route, is something of a legend on the local scene. Daughter Susy won the Crazyman back in 1997 and went on to a world junior duathlon title and represented New Zealand in triathlon, duathlon and cycling. But Dad has won more national and world titles as one of the country's best masters duathletes and runners. At the Crazyman he finished mid-field ahead of participants 20, 30, 40, 50 years younger, but simply shrugged, "I just wanted to see if the body could still get around."

*John Wood*

