

2XU AUSTRALIAN JUNIOR TRIATHLON SERIES – RACE 1

CANBERRA – JANUARY 2010

By Ashlee Bailie

In January this year, I was one of the 6 athletes lucky enough to race in Canberra as part of the TEP Squad. Looking after us was Coach Grant and Mother Hen, Kim.

We were flying in class with Qantas Airlines, (usually its budget stuff for me), and enjoyed a late meal and entertainment, however most of us chose to watch the back of our eyelids. After a long and late flight we arrived in Canberra.

We arrived to our accommodation only to be told that we were unable to check in for another couple of hours. So, we made do with what we had and made the office our temporary accommodation stashing our bags and using the water filter to fill up our drink bottles. We used this time to put our bikes back together. Although all I had to do was put my wheels on and pump them up (about the only positive about being small), this task took a good hour and we were happy to lounge around the pool and have a dip. After pestering the lovely man at the front office 5 more times (I am not over exaggerating), we were finally able to check into our rooms. I think the man in the office was happy to see the back of us and have his office back to himself. We had, however, drunk the water filter dry.

It was not long after we had put our stuff down that it was time to ride down to the race course. We rode to the course from last year only to find out the transition had moved to a different location on Lake Burley Griffin due to water conditions. We sussed out the new course and rode over it to familiarise it.

The rest of the day consisted of a 2 hour nanna nap (I snuck in 3) and a lovely carb filled dinner made by Mother Hen, Kim. It was then time for sleep again and sleep we did.

The next morning was spent killing time. A house filled with young and restless triathletes simply waiting, an experience one will always remember. When it was finally time to go, we rode together as a group to the race.

With the girl's race being first, us 4 girls were beginning to feel the nerves. I, however, was able to put the race out of my head for a short time when I was able to see my brother who had spent that month training in Canberra at the AIS. After a pep talk from Coach Grant, (and brother), us girls were rearing to go.

The race itself was tough, racing in 40+ heat usually is, and although I did not have a good race, it is one that I learnt a lot from. It was good to see the younger girls get experience too and it was great

to have been in a bike pack with 2 more of my fellow WA athletes, Jenelle and Kym. Once the race was over, us girls were eager to watch how the boy's race would pan out. The boys too had a tough race and it was great to see the WA boys do so well. It was especially rewarding to be able to watch Mike Lori, another WA athlete to have placed.

Big thanks to Grant and Kim who were amazing during the race. You could hear Kim encouraging calls along the race course and Grant's wise encouragement gave you something to think about.

That night we were able to enjoy dinner at a restaurant with a top coach from ACT and one of his Olympian athletes. We were able to learn much from both athlete and coach.

Overall the trip to Canberra was a great experience. Although not one of my best races, I can easily say that Canberra was a race that I walked away from with more experience and the motivation to become better. It also was a trip that brought all the squad members closer. It is these types of trips that allow you to learn more about individuals, such as Kenji's 5 showers a day (I am not joking).

I would like to thank Coach Grant for all his knowledgeable help and Kim for her mothering ways on this trip. Also, to TWA and all the other supporters of the TEP Squad for making an experience like this one possible.

Ashlee Bailie.