



ITU Triathlon World Championships

Gold Coast, 9 - 13 September 2009

Race Report



World Championships - Olympic Distance **Felicity Sheedy-Ryan** 20th Elite Women's Field

One of the most exciting things, I think, an athlete can hope for in their career apart from breaking records, representing their country at an Olympics or walking away with some “bling” around their necks as a result! Is the opportunity to race and compete for their country on home turf with friends,

family and supporters right at their side. 2009 Worlds on the Gold coast gave so many athletes this opportunity, and I am so fortunate that I was also able to be part of this opportunity too.

With a very frustrating and injury riddled start to the 2009 racing season my goals of making the Australian team looked more and more like a long shot. However, as my European season continued I finally started to see a glimpse of some form I was hoping for, and as a result was privileged to be given my first selection to an Australian Team.

Going into race day, I was feeling confident, nervous, but feeling good. I was healthy and had been feeling really great in the water. Apart from lacking a few run km's, from having only been running a few months, I had seen times drop over the lead up weeks. I was the freshman of the team, but so excited and proud to finally be in the green and gold, on home turf. I was pumped.

Then I watched the boys swim on tv...and realised the benefits a kick box class would have given me for the swim! None the less this prepared me for the swim and was ready for the fist fight that would inevitably meet me, as of course there was no way I would be out front of the water, but I could put myself in the best possible position.

Race Day

I was greeted by my friendly bowl of cereal, muesli and banana, a light ride in the morning, and some bad taste music of mine on the ipod, which was still ten times better than whatever Video hits was dishing up!

Swim

After a giggle and thumbs up to the to the awesome chants from the Aussie team painted in green and gold and the boys in their bikinis?...

I was focused and ready to attack the water. I know only too well from experience that my race could make or break in the first ten minutes unless I stayed focused and went hard to stay in a good position in the water as long as possible. The Gun went and that was it, everything I have worked for in my triathlon so far had begun. I had a good start and got to the first buoy in a great position, even better I was still feeling great, as I braced for the fist fight. Sure enough that's what it was! A slight misdirection by the pack before getting back on course kept the swim quite rough until the next buoy as well.

The beauty of a land run mid swim is it allows you to see your position in the water. Going into lap two, I was happy where I was sitting and just had to keep or improve on that position. Unfortunately the swim exit posed a slight mishap, as there was a metal fence barricade submerged by the exit, which my face managed to find and collide with, before friendly “athlete X” behind me thought she was the hulk and the quickest way around this to exit the water was to throw me over this fence!

The cycle, was the biggest disappointment of the race. After my pack exiting only 30sec behind the leaders and a stones throw away from the second bunch, it was really disappointing to see our group did not work well together at all, and we did not close the gap to the second bunch when we most definitely could and should have. Even more so, as our bunch had a couple of strong cyclists in it. The course was really quite windy, so without an organised effort by the pack, making up ground just wouldn't happen,.. and It didn't. Disappointing as it would have set the run and final result up very differently for a couple of girls in the third pack including myself.

Unfortunately after dismounting towards the back of my bunch into T2, a smooth transition still saw me out onto the run with the same girls, and the running race began. With a fast pace set straight off the bike, I was hoping to stick with the German, Dittmer. After racing her two weeks prior, and a good runner, I knew she would have been a great pace setter for me to try and stick with. But exiting transition just behind didn't allow me to get on her feet, and she went on to clock the fastest run of the day. With a field of people up the road, some a little further up the road than we would have liked, it would now just be a matter of how many people could be reeled back in, and after feeling great the day before really wanted to hammer the run and hopefully work somewhere up to 15th position and above. My legs started off a bit heavier than I had anticipated but by the middle 5km of the run they were turning over quick and smooth and I had worked up into about 17th place. With the help of some great support from coaches, staff, fellow Aussies, and of course the boys in their bikinis, (who by this stage, had dug a grave for their vocal chords, and could only measele out whispers as a cheer now!) It was home stretch. Bam! Then came the wall. Unfortunately in the last 1.5 km my pace slowed, and I was repassed by a couple of the girls Id chased down. Though angry with losing it in the last km, I must say rounding the finish shoot with all the Aussie supporters was amazing and a surreal feeling that lifts you no end!

Over all finishing 20th , I was happy with aspects of my race but certainly plenty to work on for next time, it proved an invaluable experience, and the

support and well wishes from the Aussie crowd was fantastic, and such a memorable experience leaving “ you hungry for more ”

So for now it is a massive thanks to everyone who helped me get to that start line and the support both on and before race day. I am crossing my fingers, and like in the Hair and the Tortoise, I am hoping to be taking the tortoise approach.

....Though the tortoise probably always swam much better than I did!

Felicity Sheedy-Ryan