



Race Report



World Long Distance Championships Neil Mendum 2nd 35 – 39 Age Group

Driving back from the Busselton Half Ironman my friend Chris mentioned I should try and qualify for the Australian team. Winning the age category result that day was a bit of a shock for me, as I never expected the race to go so well. Fast forward 6 months and after a pretty gruelling winter training schedule I was getting quite nervous watching the start of the pro elite race, due to the strong winds, and the long morning ahead.

The horn went off and I started off pretty hard to try and get some space, I followed what I thought was the lead pack for a while but eventually got

dropped...It would be tempting to blame my Scottish ancestry for my swimming but there were some great swim times posted by the guys out front... At the turn around I managed to pick up another set of feet and then was on my own pretty much to the end of the swim. I could feel someone else on my feet but was quite happy to pull him/her along as there didn't seem to be anyone else around. A reasonably quick change and I had a clean jump onto the bike, (thanks to a couple of hours spent practising mounts and dismounts the week before). The strong winds and the multi-directional bike leg made for a very mixed bike, I felt really bad at some points and at others really good. After a while I just concentrated on picking people off and a rider ahead acted as a good pace maker setting a tempo which was difficult on such a windy day.

A good change and out on the run. I had done lots of bike/run blocks in training and had the confidence that I could run hard off the bike regardless of how wasted my legs felt. The first lap felt great as did the second. By the time the third came round the thought of consolidating my position came into my head as I was starting to wonder if I'd "over cooked" myself on the first two laps. The final lap turned out to be a real survival contest for me with the heat and fatigue starting to kick in.

As a result of the weather conditions I found the race mentally very hard with several highs and lows...a real journey. To qualify for the Australian team for me was a real achievement and to place second at the world championships is really overwhelming. I'd like to thank a few people who helped me along the way, my friend Chris Toia for the training rides and advice, the Duncan family here in Bunbury for the swim coaching, inspiration and motivation, and my girlfriend for all the support during the training months and helping me keep a balanced perspective on life outside triathlon.

Neil Mendum.