



Race Report

Australian Age Group Olympic Distance Championships Canberra, Sunday 24th January

James Lewin – 2nd 16-19 Age Category



I only made the decision to do this race 4 weeks ago, as a potential way of qualifying for a professional license. I needed to get in the top 3 fastest times overall.

I had spent the four weeks leading up to the race training with a Brisbane based triathlon club, under NTID coach Warwick Dalziel. I think I really benefited from this training stint, especially learning how to train hard in the heat and humidity.

The starting list for the race looked promising, with many of the national age group champions from 2009 choosing not to defend their titles, but there was still some very stiff competition, including a 39 year old who is said to be able to run a 34 minute 10km off the bike.

Swimming in fresh water, without a wetsuit is not a favourable combination for me and on top of this I chose a bad spot on the starting line and put myself at a big disadvantage. In my wave were all males under 30 years, so I could be fairly confident that if I got top 3 from that wave, I would get top 3 overall. For most of the 1500m I was chasing down a pack of 6 swimmers who had a big advantage from their position on the start line, and I managed to get out of the water with them. We all set out to chase down 3 men who had a 90 second gap out the water.

I was getting into my rhythm on the bike, riding with some good cyclists and pulling back time on the leaders. About 15kms into the bike I was unlucky enough to be caught for drafting and was to serve a 3 minute penalty at the end of that lap (I will try to avoid complaining and protesting my innocence...but I wasn't drafting!). For anyone who has had to serve a time penalty before, nothing could be more frustrating. Standing in the penalty box watching everyone going past, feeling your legs cramping up, is not ideal. My mum and coach told me to put it behind me and get to work chasing down the time that I had lost...easier said than done. It took me a long time to find my legs again, in fact the last 20km of the ride felt terrible.

With 2km to go on the bike I was passed by a very fast cyclist from my wave and I pushed to stay with him into transition. We got off the bike together, about 5 minutes behind the leaders. We set out at a fairly fast pace hoping to make up a few places as quickly as possible. As soon as we rounded the first bend we were hit with a big hill, in fact most of the 10km run was hills, not what I expected at all!

On the first 5km loop we pulled back a few places, but unfortunately we weren't making up any time on the 2 leaders who were running away from the rest of the field. On the second lap the hills began to take their toll on my legs and I really struggled to maintain my cadence up the climbs, but I was still determined to get back as many positions as I could. I ended up bringing back 7 spots and crossing the line 2nd in my age group, but unfortunately my time was only 11th fastest overall, not enough to get me a pro license.

Although bitterly disappointed with my race, I was able to take some positives away. I was quite happy to get out of the water with some strong swimmers

around me, and my run split off the bike is a 10km PB for me, and I also gained a valuable lesson: don't test ACT TO's.

I would like to say a big thanks to all the member of the TEP and the Carina Leagues Triathlon Club who got up at the crack of dawn, the day after their race to come down and watch me, and my Mum who flew over from Perth on a whim, they were a real big help!

James Lewin