



Devonport Oceania/Australian Olympic Championships

20th February 2015

2015 brought the celebration of the 30th year anniversary of the Devonport Triathlon and this had much more of an affect on me than I would have thought. I attended the official celebration of the anniversary where I heard stories from past years and realised most of Australia's greatest triathletes have made their mark at this race. I also had the privilege of staying with the very accommodating Redman family. Not only did they make my life leading up to the race very easy but I was also given an insight into Craig Redman's competing days and the great athletes he raced against. One sentence stuck with me and that was when Craig Walton's coach told him 'No matter what, you finish this race'. Despite getting a flat tyre mid ride, Craig went on to finish the race and as a result was selected for a World Championships.



Braddons Lookout. Not a bad place for a Tasmanian history lesson.

Fast forward a few years and I am on the start line at Bluff Beach in Devonport nervously waiting to race my first ITU Olympic distance race since October 2013. With the water being 20.5 degrees, the 1500m swim was to be a non-wetsuit swim. For someone who lives 800m from the beach, my start wasn't the best so I spent about 1km searching for the feet of the

front pack girls. Amongst the choppy water I found some good feet and exited the swim in the front group.



The bike course was slightly different to previous years. The laps were shortened which meant 8x up the famous North Street hill. The benefit of being coached by the person who suggested this course variation is that I felt prepared. The lead pack of 7 worked pretty well together and we hit transition with a bit of a lead...well 6 out of 7 of us did. I had a slight tumble at the dismount line.

I had spent the final 2km of the bike ensuring I would be in a good position coming off the bike. I'll let the pictures do the talking.





Photo credit: Jason Hollister – The Advocate Newspaper

I think I was winded for 20 seconds or so and then when I realised things felt ok, I remembered what Craig Redman had told me and I said to the paramedics, 'I'm fine', grabbed my bike and hit transition as though that had never happened.

I was slightly shaken in the first lap of the run but I soon found a little rhythm and was able to pick up two girls leaving me to cross the line in 5th position, 2nd in the U23 Oceania Championships and 2nd in the Australian Championships.



U23 Oceania Podium

Overall, I am content with my result. I still have a lot to work on but things are heading in the right direction. Thank you to; Triathlon Australia for their continued support over the weekend, Michael Bonney for putting on a very well run event and also to the Redman and Birthwhistle families who both made the weekend much easier.

Next up the Oceania Cup in two weeks times on home turf in Wollongong.

Grace