

ARE TRIATHLONS ADDICTIVE?

They told me that triathlons were addictive! I smiled and nodded my head, not thinking any more of it. I don't have an addictive personality, not unless you count exercising and all I wanted to do was the Noosa Triathlon. After completing the Noosa tri in a FTPB time (First Time Personal Best!), I was happy to ride along on the glory of calling myself a triathlete. But could I call myself a triathlete after only one triathlon? Did I have another tri in me? Was I a one-tri wonder?

Immediately after Noosa, we went to Cambodia for two weeks; my husband's 40th birthday but my reward for completing Noosa! Christmas came and went as did my daughters' birthdays and New Year's Eve. It was around about the time that everyone starts talking about New Year's Resolutions that I briefly toyed with the idea of doing Mooloolaba triathlon but without registering the year before, I didn't have a place. I wasn't too worried; I could always race in a team. Although having just completed my first Olympic distance tri, I didn't want to go "back" to racing in a team when I knew I could complete the whole thing! In fact, I wanted to do another full race, just to see if the run leg hurt as much as I remember it hurting at Noosa! So when that miracle post came through on the Twinnies FB page about Mooloolaba opening up registrations again, I jumped at the chance. I registered on the spot. It was about 10pm at night after a few glasses of wine so it didn't really hit me until the morning after, that I had just registered for another Olympic distance tri without training!

So it was 6 weeks out from Mooloolaba, and I hadn't been on my bike since Noosa. Not being a natural rider I really need an excuse to go riding and now I had it. My next triathlon! I was slightly worried only having 6 weeks to train but that very week I went straight back to Twinnies Saturday morning tri, 4.30am overcast and all! I put my training diary up on the fridge and got into it. I started swimming, riding and running like a crazy women, sometimes 3 sessions a day. It was an intense schedule but I only had to keep it up for 5 weeks with a taper week at the end.

I have decided that after 20 years as a sportsperson, I train best with a goal. And that's what Mooloolaba was for me; another goal in a new sport that I had found a passion for. I wanted to see what another course felt like. I'd heard differing reports that it was faster than Noosa, because of the road surface, slower than Noosa because of the wind and hills, but I wanted to see for myself. Two days prior to Mooloolaba the run course was flooded and there was a cyclone warning. The morning of, it was pouring with rain as I was driving to transition. It was turning out to be my worst case scenario but having done a few of the Saturday morning tri's on wet roads in the rain, I let go of what I couldn't control.

The feeling of being in the transition area and the anticipation of the race ahead is just one of things I love about triathlons and this was no exception. This time however, I felt like I belonged, I was "experienced", I'd done this before! I placed my shoes, hat, race belt and other bits and pieces next to my bike, reacquainted myself with my entry and exit points and left transition in a state of calm.

Two hours later I was making the 10 minute journey to the swim start, with hundreds of others. The 29 minute swim went well although a little choppy. Getting to the transition from the swim was a small run in itself but through the cheering crowd it was nice. Next leg; bike! It didn't start well for one 35-39 year old lady running in front of me. She slipped on the wet gutter in her bike shoes and I left her limping gingerly towards the exit. I was prepared for the ride because that's what everyone talks about. The few small hills then long flat and smooth to the turnaround when the wind rips through you. It turns out that I don't do too badly in the swim, when I realise how many people in my wave pass me on the bike! It really hit me at 37kms struggling back up one of the last hills,

the strongest point of the wind and right at the end of the ride. But with only 3kms to go and my favourite leg next, I pushed through. After 1hour 22 minutes on the bike, I was given an extra boost over the last kilometre riding down through the crowd back into transition. Finally, my favourite leg, the run. I was a little apprehensive going into the run leg. It was at this point in Noosa, that I started feeling horrible. I wasn't sure how I would feel and after all the training I had done, I was surprised to feel as bad as I did. I was drained, hot and had no energy. This time however, I was prepared for that feeling and wasn't so surprised and shocked running off the bike. I wouldn't go so far as to say I felt great, but I definitely felt better than Noosa. I think the fact that I only had 6 weeks to train was actually beneficial. I felt tired by the time I got to Noosa but I was so excited approaching Mooloolaba. Although I think the run leg was tougher than Noosa, I felt much better. Having said that, the wind on the run is as bad as the wind on the bike and everyone forgets to tell you about that. After the first turnaround, hitting that wind as you are running up the hill is as much a mental challenge as it is a physical one, especially having to do it twice. I had trained for the hills by running around Burleigh National Park so although they hurt it didn't feel so bad. I felt better in this run than I had at Noosa so I was happy about that. I made it in my best time yet coming in at just over 46 minutes. Overall, I thought I'd be happy to break 2:50:00 but I even broke 2:40:00 finishing with a time of 2:38:16.



Mooloolaba Triathlon was a great success for me. I wanted to know if I have another tri in me and not only did I; I bettered my time from Noosa. So I'm working my way down the coast of South East Queensland and next on the tri agenda is Gold Coast. After my last two big ones, this one should be a breeze at only half the distance. But I'm most excited about my next big adventure, the Paris Triathlon in July. An Olympic distance triathlon starting in the Seine and ending under the most visited tourist site in the world, the Eiffel Tower! Summer in Paris with a triathlon thrown in, what a holiday!

By the time July comes, I will have completed four triathlons within a year, so I guess you could say that triathlons are addictive. Thankfully though, this is an addiction that I don't have to be treated for...yet!