

World Champs 2012 – Auckland, NZ

23rd October, 2012

Well, it was a long way from Twin Towns to Auckland, NZ last weekend. Ok, it may only be three hours across the “ditch” from the Goldie but the journey to World Champs was long with a few vomit moments – self inflicted in training for the event, not on the plane.

OK I never got myself to vomit in training, but I sounded a bit hard core for a minute there didn't I??!!

I had been planning this trip since the beginning of last season when a few of my age group friends got interested in going to NZ. Three qualifying tris last season and the requisite amount of qualifying points later, I made it on to the Aussie age group team and scored a green and gold tri suit with SOWERBY across the butt! Awesome! Add in another three Sowerbys in the form of husband and two kids and Team Sowerby World Champs was born.

Into the mix was lots of support from the sultri girls, a send off Kona BBQ for inspiration and lots of Twinnies well wishes via facebook and text – where would we be without technology? Team Sowerby arrived in NZ last Tuesday and the week seemed to fly by filled with various tri commitments and organization.

Wednesday was bike assembly day but the main event was the Aussie team Dinner, a huge catered event run by Triathlon Australia and attended by over 600 Aussies. There were elite, age groupers and para-triathletes at this event, and with inspirational speeches, we all really felt part of the big Aussie team. The week rolled by with the Parade of Nations on Thursday night followed by the opening ceremony/pasta party. Friday was registration day, Sat was team photo and bike technical briefing day, Sun was busy with race briefing, watching the elite men's race and bike racking.... By the end of the week and despite all attempts to convince myself otherwise, it was not feeling very much like a “fri night I'll decide if I will do Twinnies in the morning” event. Added to this excitement was training in the Auckland weather in the week leading in to the event with 45km/ hour winds with up to 120km/hr gusts, daily rain, temperatures in single digits and a water temperature of 14 degrees (brrrr) - it was shaping up to be a triathlon survivor contest!

Fortunately, for the race organisers and most likely the medical tent, the sun did peek out on race day, the rain held back and the temperatures, well, they stayed about the same. The transition area was phenomenal, and made Noosa transition look like the Twinnies racking area.



Transition was this big times 6!!!

Time to race! With SMILE written on my hand, and my new HUUB wetsuit and pink racecap on we were marched down onto the pontoon into the harbour. We were given only one minute to become acclimatized to the freezing water and then we were off! Past the harbour wharf, things got a bit choppy, bouys were hard to spot, and I subconsciously decided it wasn't tough enough and ended up doing half ironman distance swim!

Onto the bike and goal one was to stay upright, a feat which I was already down one point after being blown off my bike by a wind gust on Wednesday. The kiwis had a big advantage having trained on the very technical bike course with all of its turns and off camber roads. Fortunately, during the race, I managed to stay perpendicular to the tarmac, although suspect I should have taken the Twinnies safety vest as I was riding the course like I was on a cruiser, which didn't do much for my bike split!

Anyway, all was much improved when my feet hit the ground and I was self-assured that I would neither get run over by a harbour ferry or a madman age group male cyclist. The highlight for me was that I pb'd my run, chasing down a Canadian at the end with a sprint finish Lisa Ross - style, only to have a good laugh with her that we weren't even in the same age group!! It didn't come together perfectly on race day but I ended up 17th in my age group - which, in my opinion, was not too shabby!!!

The Kiwis put on an awesome event and the all the volunteers, race organisation and facilities were first class - well, aside from my racking position being in a massive puddle! I made lots of new friends in the Aussie team and that was priceless. All in all, a great experience and one I would encourage others to have a go at.

Would I do it again? Absolutely – after all, it is more about the about the journey than the end. The end, by the way, was a massive chicken burger, hot chips and ice cream washed down with a vodka, lime and soda. NZ world champs, done and dusted. London 2013? Could be awesome.....



With my new Aussie age group mates, Janelle and Georgia.