

***Winner Winner Chicken Dinner.***

This came faster than I thought it would. 2014's first Race Report.

Since my run training has been augmenting gradually and cautiously, we didn't make plans too far ahead of time, which is why racing came as a bit of surprise to me, and maybe to others as well. I got plane tickets on Monday for a Wednesday flight. When we first landed on the Sunshine Coast, it almost felt like a vacation. Pristine beaches, clear waters, beautiful sunsets, arrays of charming boutiques and independent coffee shops on the promenade along the beach. Idyllic.



I tried to stay calm on Saturday and focus on my race prep, as the excitement in the air was palpable. The World Cup race went off Saturday afternoon, where a fast and furious sprint ended with a win for fellow Wizard Gwen, a 4<sup>th</sup> place for teammate Ellen and a 7<sup>th</sup> for Kirsten, with a killer swim leg, as well as some solid results for the Wizards on the men's side of things.

The 6:36 AM start on Sunday morning took me back to the junior days, with the pre-dawn oatmeal and riding down to the race course in the dark. The race organizers decided to switch the swim from the open ocean to the river/canal a few blocks down the street, which was slightly disappointing as I believe all the work we have done in the open water in Wollongong would have benefited the Wizards in their respective races, myself included. With the small field, the start wasn't as paramount as it will be later on this season, but I still swam hard to the first buoy and tried to get on some fast feet. I exited the water with a couple other girls after a solid effort, and I believed there were a few more girls ahead, although the quick start after the boys meant that we did catch a few lads which created some confusion.

I was promised the bike would be flat as a pancake. These people do not know pancake flat; there were most definitely a few overpasses that do not qualify as flat. Try growing up in Manitoba. Either way, the rises weren't quite enough to break up our little group of 4, of which 3 of us were rolling turns like a well-oiled machine. By that point we had dropped some weaker riders and caught anyone who might have outswam me. Which meant I got off the bike in T2 feeling pretty good about this racing deal.



Pic cred: @multisporttri

Unto the unknown territory of the run leg! I tried to keep the pace conservative as I didn't know how my legs and my mind would handle running a 10km. I was pleasantly surprised to see that my legs held up, as I kept my lead to the end with a fairly comfortable advantage, had time to hand out a few high fives and put out some wizard hands.

Then came the really impressive part. I had less than 2 hours to do the medal ceremony, complete with national anthem and champagne, finish up a drug test, pack my bike, my suitcase, and shower off the

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champagne to catch the shuttle to the airport back to Wollongong. Shout out to LNpennock for the fastest bike disassembly ever



*Champagne ceremony fun, with Wizard Jake B who won the men's race. Kelly-Ann Perkins and Penny Hayes complete the women's podium.*

I showed up for an easy bike on Monday and I everything I was doing was wrong (what I was wearing, how I was standing, still wearing race numbers...). Things don't change, it's back to work.

Next up: Auckland WTS. Quite the step up in competition level, but I'm ready for the challenge.

Thanks for reading

-sarah