



Forster 2005

The last Forster Ironman Australia! I never thought that this would happen. I had mixed feelings of disappointment at this being the last of twenty Ironman races held at the twin towns of Forster/Tuncurry and excitement of something new at Port Macquarie next year. I was amazed at how quickly the announcement came that there would be a change of venue.



-The traditional Trysport 'pre race chat'-



-Bec Gill directing traffic in the last session-

Everyone has heard that the local organizing committee were less than happy with IMG's announcement of the race going to Port Macquarie and this was reflected in the general feel and running of the race. It didn't seem to have the 'spark' I have seen there in previous years.

Forster this year was a hot one! Many athletes paid the price for not allowing adequately for the heat, specifically the subsequent electrolyte loss from the high sweat rates. Conditions were ideal early with some very fast times recorded on the bike by many athletes.

Macca and Luke Bell absolutely flew on the first lap, trying to sort each other out. Both rode 4hr 40 bike splits. Awesome to watch.

Right from the outset, the women's race was a close one, with Granger, Lawn, Bentley, Egyd and Ashton all riding in close proximity.

Given Bentley's awesome run ability, Granger and Ashton were working very hard to try and put some time into her, to have a buffer in the marathon. Not this year! Bentley has improved a lot on the bike in recent times, her bike split was only 3 minutes slower than Grangers (although she(Bentley) appears to waste a lot of energy on the bike for mine) and with a 3 hr 5 minute marathon split, the race was hers yet again!



-Young Mr Rusbridge, all excited and ready for a long day spectating?-

The local boys put on a show in the cycle leg! Jon Pettingill & Dave Boyes rode like men possessed and I think a few other WA boys paid the price for trying to go with them.

One of the unfortunate factors with the Forster venue is that the course is too confined for the numbers that the organizers allow to race. Drafting is commonplace and I think a few athletes get sucked in to riding with groups that are a bit too quick for them. It is interesting to see the times recorded here. They always seem to be faster than what I know my athletes are capable of!

I always like to watch closely, the athletes I coach at the end of the first lap of the bike, to get an idea of how they have paced and nourished themselves up until that stage. The alarm bells were ringing loudly when I saw Steve Bishop come into town. I thought that Steve didn't look too good and this turned out to be true.

‘Didn’t feel good after the first lap of the swim’ was his reply, after the race. (And punctured...again!!!)

Disappointing!, he worked very hard for this one.

At the start of the run, it looked like a war zone. A few paid the price for their inappropriate pacing on the bike and as a result had to ease into the marathon a lot slower than they are capable of.



-Dave Holland enjoying the Cycle leg, all smiles!-

An awesome race by Mark Goodhand of Esperance got him frustratingly close to that much wanted Hawaii spot. Dean Thornton had a blinder as well, knocking a chunk of time off last years effort. Scott Taylor, Matt Terry and Marilyn Connell of Albany, all did very well. One of the performances of the day went to Melissa Cundy for mine. First timer and looked comfortable all day. Smile on the dial and strong consistent pace. Well Done!

Quite a few PB’s for those coming back to race Forster again from last year. Well done. Port Macquarie will be an improvement over Forster. I had a look at the town on the Saturday prior to the Ironman and I was impressed with the probable race venue.(Similar to the Long Distance Champs). The swim course is more open. T1 and T2 should be in the same location. The roads are better, in terms of surface and width. This should reduce the likelihood of overcrowding. The hills at the start of the bike course will help to break up the packs. The Run course around the waters edge, is relatively flat. Port Macquarie is a bigger town than Forster and subsequently has much more accommodation and facilities. An Airport for starters!

I know the traditionalists probably don't agree, but I think that it will be good to see a fresh new venue. See you in PM next year!



-Another successful Ironman finish by Erica Rusbridge-

To all of the athletes I coached for Ironman Australia 2005, thank you for the opportunity to be involved in your preparation.

It is an experience I will never tire of, watching my athletes tackle and conquer the beast, that is Ironman.

By Andrew Budge.