



ITU Triathlon World Championships

Gold Coast, 9 - 13 September 2009

Race Report



World Championships - Olympic Distance Loretta Wesley – World Age Group Champion 1st 45 - 49 age group

I came into the race quite relaxed as I have prepared solidly all throughout our wet winter here in Perth and knew I had prepared as best I could as I am also doing the Long Course Championships later in October. I was excited about racing again on the Gold Coast as I claimed a bronze in the 1991 Gold Coast World Champs in the 25-29 age group and was really looking forward to some kinder and warmer weather and a break from my busy life in Perth. I couldn't let all that hard winter work go to waste.

I was staying with Bob and Judy Scott who looked after me fantastically. In our group on the floor below us were Mark Batten and Rob Pickard who also raced at the Gold Coast Worlds in 1991, so it was great that we could all do it again. I didn't have to worry about much with these well seasoned athletes keeping me line! I enjoyed the few days prior relaxing and some light training and almost forgot about the race when we were chatting and drinking coffee by the beach, watching the surfers. I was hoping to improve on my two bronze age-group medals, but also thought that I may be lucky to just get a top 10 result. (I also won a bronze in Perth in 2000.) I didn't sleep much the night prior, but wasn't worried as I had expected that. We were unsure prior whether it would be a wetsuit swim as the ITU regulation was 22 degrees and the water temperature had been hovering around this for the past few days. I wasn't too fussed either way. Wetsuits were allowed. I pumped my tyres, and after finally finding the gear tent I needed to jog the 1.5km to the swim start to give me enough time to get ready. That was okay as it could be my warm up and gave me enough time to comfortably get my wetsuit on and stretch. The wave format was paratriathletes first, followed by all females in their individual waves starting with the youngest agegroups to the eldest and then the same for the males. My swim wave left at 7.35 am.

I enjoyed the smooth, well marked swim (my weakest leg) passing a few from the wave of 40-44 aged females that started 6 minutes in front of me. I came out in a bit over 25 minutes hearing the announcer say that 4th to 14th place all came out in a short space of each other.

I found the flat, two lap bike ride quick, but fortunately for me it wasn't too congested and I found plenty of my own space overtaking many of the age-group in front of me. I was encouraged by this and felt pretty strong, leaving enough in reserve for a good run. I was unsure of my placing by the end of the bike, but knew I was close to the lead as no-one from behind had overtaken me except on my second bike lap a few males from their first waves. When I racked my bike I thought my rack looked pretty empty, but was unsure whether other racks were also allocated for my age-group, but didn't stop to look as I was on a mission. I ended up doing 1.06 and averaging just over 36 kph.

I maintained an even quick pace on the run, again overtaking many females thus encouraging me even more. I knew there were potentially some very fast runners behind me and just had to run as strong as I could as this was the opportunity I had been waiting for for many years. I passed a NZ girl towards the end of the first run lap who eventually came second. I did not recollect seeing any more from my age-group during the run. I was also buoyed on by the crowd calling out my name (as it had "WESLEY" on my race suit and "Loretta" on my number). Many of those that were due to race the sprint the following day were out in force giving heaps of support. My run split was 40.31 and with transitions my finish time was 2 hr 15 mins 26 seconds.

When I finished, I thought that I may have won, but was unsure. It wasn't until I collected my gear bag and phoned my husband Dale, back in Perth that he confirmed that I actually had finally done it! (He had followed my race on the internet and saw live video of me finishing.) I was ecstatic as many people have contributed to my success and share in my medal...my family who have made many willing sacrifices, the people I train with and my room mates that looked after me during the race week. I felt proud wearing my uniform and to be an Aussie. My 22 years experience in triathlons (less some time off having kids) gave me great experience to perform at my best. I hope to continue this passion in the future, taking turns racing with my husband and as the kids grow up with them as well.

Congratulations to all the others that won medals and those that qualified and raced the Worlds on the Gold Coast and good luck to those that have qualified for Perth.

Thanks,

Loretta Wesley