



NZ CHAMPS



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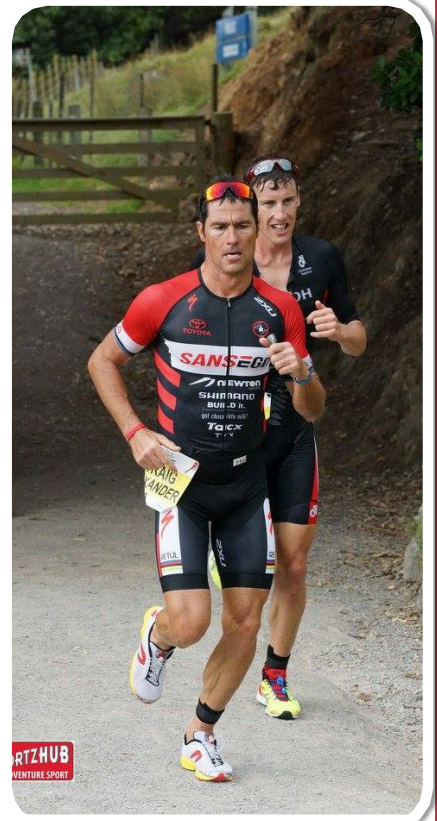
Another year rolled around and it was time to race the NZ long distance champs again down at the Port of Tauranga. I'll keep this short as I have another race this weekend. Training since my win in Taupo went very well so I was confident and excited to race the very good field that was assembled, with the likes of 5x world Champion Craig Alexander, Cam Brown, Braden Curry, Graham O'Grady and Ryan Sissions.

The swim for me went pretty good I came out the water in the lead of the main pack which was 30-40sec behind leader O'Grady. That group held all the key players which was a little disappointing for me as I would have liked to have a gap on the 'runners'. On to the bike and I felt good, I went straight to the front and reeled O'Grady in after about 5km. After that I had to keep pushing hard as I wanted break the group up. I guess this was a bit ambitious on my behalf as you are not going to ride the likes of Craig, Cam and Braden off your wheel when the draft zone is effectively 8m (10m front wheel to front wheel). The first 45km went very quick, about 62mins and it was the hardest I have ever pushed at the start of a half ironman. By that point the group had gone from about 7 to 4 (me, Craig, Cam, Braden). It stayed like this with Braden yo-yoing off the back for the next 45km. Into T2 It was Brown, Craig and I with Braden 10sec behind. And now it was a foot race! I felt good and we ran as a group for the first km until Braden Curry came storming past, I made the decision to try and go with him as I could. I ran on his shoulder for the next few km until he started to pull away and then Crowie ran up to me.

Again I went with him and ran side by side with him onto the track around the base of the Mt with Cam about 10m back. To my surprise I was feeling good and actually started to put a couple of meters into Craig on the undulations around the Mt. But about ¾ round when I was in 2nd I had stomach issues and had to exit stage left and find a bush, DAM! I got back on the course but by this time I was in 4th, but I could still see Cam and Crowie. I tried for the next few km to catch back up but I couldn't and by that point once they were out of sight I just ran it home with Auckland 70.3 to think about, and make sure I held of the fast charging Ryan Sissons. So I ended up in 4th it was a very fun race to be apart of and I am excited to do it all again on Sunday in Auckland.

Hope you all had a great Christmas and New Years

Regards,
Mark



Photo's: Sports Hub

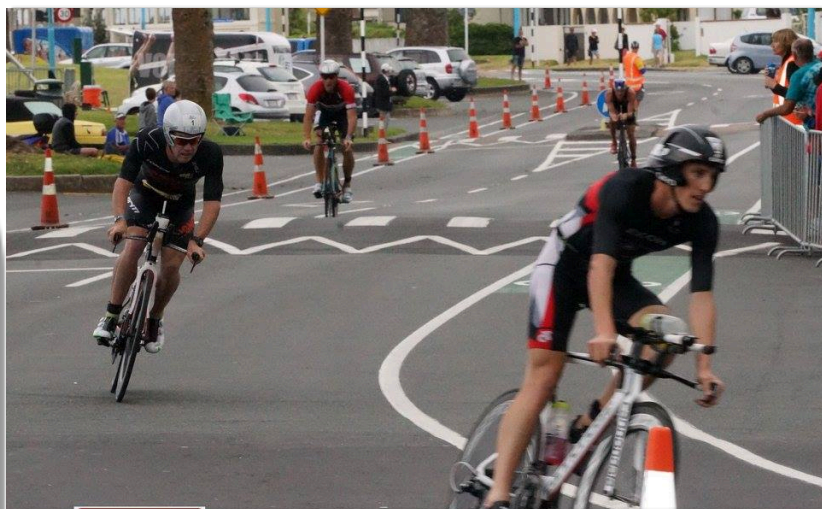


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Craig Alexander	Australia, NZ	6	23:02	4	1:59	2	2:07:31	4	1:11	2	1:14:20	1	3:48:03
Braden Currie	Wanaka, NZ	4	22:58	1	1:54	4	2:07:50	3	1:10	3	1:15:20	3	3:49:12
Cameron Brown	Auckland, NZ	7	23:04	8	2:08	1	2:07:19	7	1:13	4	1:15:50	4	3:49:34
Mark Bowstead	Waiuku, NZ	3	22:54	2	1:54	3	2:07:46	6	1:11	5	1:19:39	5	3:53:24
Ryan Sissons	Cambridge, NZ	5	22:58	6	2:06	5	2:13:39	1	1:06	1	1:14:01	6	3:53:50

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