



Wolfaardt, Steyn champs again!

By TuksSport

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Andrea Steyn wins

Potchefstroom's Erhard Wolfaardt and Andrea Steyn of Pretoria won the final leg of the 2010 BSG Energade Triathlon Series at Big Bay, Boubergstrand in Cape Town on Sunday, December 5, to once again be crowned the competition's senior champions.

While Steyn cruised to victory Wolfaardt was made to work hard for his win as the only two athletes to beat him in the series in the past two years, Durban's Claude Eksteen and Cape Town's Richard Murray, pushed him hard right to the end of the race.

At the start of the testing 600m swim, 20km cycle and 5km course Britain's Daniel Halksworth took the early lead out the water with Wolfaardt, Murray, Eksteen and a group of about six other athletes hot on his heels out of transition.

On the bike, in windy conditions, the lead rotated as the athletes made a few tactical moves with the likes of Eksteen and Wolfaardt trying to break-away but the pack keeping them in their sights.

It was clear at this juncture it was going to go down to the wire and the 5km run leg would sort the men from the boys, and so it did.

Making the first move was Eksteen who raced out of transition at breakneck speed only to discover Murray and Wolfaardt where in hot pursuit and it wasn't long before the three were almost running shoulder-to-shoulder with virtually nothing separating them.

At about the 3½ km mark this changed as Murray decided to make his move upping the pace in an attempted break-away and while he managed to shake Eksteen, to his dismay the reigning champ stayed on his heels.

"I tried two more times to get away from Erhard but he just stuck with me," said a disappointed Murray after the race in front of his home crowd.

The champion on the other hand was biding his time and digging deep he (Wolfaardt) turned on the gas with 500m's to go. With his long legs pumping hard he passed Murray in a dash for the line and claimed victory in a blistering time of 50:32, in one of the most exciting races in the series in ages.

Murray, who added after the race he just couldn't do anything further to catch Wolfaardt, was second in 50:33 with Eksteen, a little off the pace, crossing the line in 50:52. The latter's performance however, was good enough to see him pick up the second prize overall for the series.

Steyn tops

In the women's race it was once again the Andrea Steyn show as the Centurion physiotherapist became the first athlete to be crowned the senior women's champion for a record fifth time having also won the title in 2005/6/8 and 9.

Going into the race unbeaten in this year's series there was little doubt she would shine and true to expectations she cantered to victory in a sub one hour time of 58:58.

While she (Steyn) wasn't out the water first after the chilly 600m sea swim - which is customary as the defending champion isn't one of the recognised swimmers in the field, she wasn't too far behind early race leaders Carlyn Fischer and Carla van Huyssteen.

A struggle in transition to get her cycle helmet fastened – she quipped after the race, “I think my fingers were frozen” - cost the reigning champ further valuable seconds but un-phased she determinedly set off on the cycle route chasing Fischer and Van Huyssteen.

By the turn around point she had hauled them in and then decided to try and break-away on the bike as she had planned before the race.

“I went for it and the other girls didn’t follow so I managed to have a comfortable lead going out on the run. I just took it easy from there and enjoyed myself,” said the champ after the race.

She did confess perhaps a little too easy as the rest of the field started to close the gap on her. She had done enough, however, to secure a comfortable victory leaving young Fischer (59:26), who did exceptionally well considering it was her first year competing in the senior ranks, to finish second and collect the runner-up prize in the series.

Van Huyssteen, who won the opening race of the competition back in October (in the absence of Steyn who was on a rest break), was third on the day in a time of 1:00:14 which is also the position she finished in the series.

Having struggled with a knee injury in the early part of the year which forced her to take a break from the sport for two months Steyn certainly bounced back well. Not only did she win her fifth BSG Energade Triathlon Series title but she also won last Sunday’s (November 28) 2010 Tshwane-Pretoria Africa Cup Triathlon event. In the latter she was also dominant crossing the line first in this Olympic-distance race in 2:09:11 five minutes clear of her closest rival Hungary’s, Zita Szabo.

Juniors

In the junior women’s section the ever smiling Mnandi Weber of Boksburg was ecstatic not only winning the final, in 1:08:51, but clinching the series title in her division at the same time.

The 16-year-old, competing for the first time in the individual junior women’s category in the competition started out with mixed results recording a third place finish in race one of the series and followed that up with a fifth place in the second race and a second spot finish in the third leg.

By race four however, at Midmar Dam, she had hit form and claimed her first triumph in the competition. She followed that up with a win in the Vanderbijlpark race and then victory on Sunday in Cape Town to claim the series title.

With this Weber emulated older brother, Wikus’ achievement who won the junior men’s title in his first attempt a few years ago.

The junior men’s race at Big Bay was a closely contested affair with Pretoria’s Wian Sullwald taking line honours in 51:41 with Vanderbijlpark’s Rudolf Naude second in 52:08 and Estiaan de Lange third in 1:01:13.

With Naude having won four races going into the final finishing second was good enough for him to collect the junior men series winner’s trophy for the first time.

Age Group winners

In the men’s 30-39 age group division top spot on the podium went to another Steyn, Wilhelm, husband of women’s champion Andrea. Showing he is also an accomplished triathlete he won his race in 57:12.

His victory wasn’t good enough to see him collect any silverware though as Tiaan Rossouw of Midrand, who had done enough earlier in the competition and came third at Big Bay, collected the overall series winner’s trophy in this division.

In the absence of Nickey Barnard and Amanda Mackridge who had dominated the first five races in the series but did not compete in Cape Town no overall series winner’s prize was given in the women’s 30-39 age group category.

The race on the day however, was won by Greenpoint’s Britt Hyland (1:08:05) with Hout Bay’s Jacqueline Metrowich (1:08:48) second and Mel Gow (1:15:28) of Woodstock third.

While Kelly Mackenzie of Bergvliet won the women’s 20-29 race at Big Bay in a time of 1:07:43 the series title went to Sunee Pretorius of Riverclub in Jo’burg.

The men’s final race winner in this (20-29) age group was Milnerton’s Nic Muhl (56:31) with Carlo Botha (59:20) of George second. The latter’s effort was good enough to see him crowned the champion in his division for 2010.

Veterans

In the veteran men’s division Andrew Cillie of Tableview crossed the line first in 1:02:06, followed by Aubrey Sumington (1:02:34) of Cape Town (city centre) and Francois Kotze (1:02:54) of Pretoria. Kotze, who excelled in previous races in the series had secured enough points to take home the overall prize as the winner of the series in this category.

Although Jaqui Pitt of Jo’burg had an awesome race at Big Bay and won the veteran women’s event in 1:08:09, beating Sue Peterkin by two seconds in the process, Peterkin had the last laugh winning this division for the third year in a row. Pitt finished second overall.

In the master men’s category no series winner’s trophy was presented as none of the top contenders like

Charles Naude, Kevin Whelan or Laurie Stegmann made the trip to Bloubergstrand.

The final race itself was won, in a time of 1:02:47, by Adrian Renaud of Worcester, who also won a week ago in Port Elizabeth. As he didn't compete in the other five races in the competition he was not eligible to win the series overall.

In the women's veteran section there was no surprise who would win at Big Bay and also collect the series winner's trophy. Pretoria's Lynette Fischer has been in great form throughout sweeping all before her and Sunday's race was no different as she won in 1:10:23 to clinch the title.

Kids champions

In a move to identify tomorrow's champions at an earlier age the organisers of the series decided that the older (12-15 age group category) competitors in the BSG Energade Kids Triathlon Series, would, from this year also be timed with winners being recognised.

As has been the case through most of the series Sidney Engelbrecht of Klerksdorp and Robyn-Leigh Jones of Benoni took top honours at Big Bay and also collected the series winner's trophy.

While this exhilarating competition, which has attracted record numbers this year, has now come to an end for 2010 athletes who want to have one last fitness test for the year should enter the BSG Prestige Ultra and BSG Olympic Distance Triathlon event taking place on December 16 at the Emerald Resort and Casino at the Vaal.

Participants can expect to be pushed to the limit in these two races as they compete in either a standard Olympic distance race, consisting of a 1.5 km swim, 40 km ride, 10 km run or go for an even bigger challenge by participating in a Half Ironman distance event - 1.9km swim, 90km cycle and 21km run.

The latter would be of particular value to those athletes who have their sights set on competing in January's Spec-Savers 70.3 in East London.

To enter the BSG Prestige Ultra and BSG Olympic Distance Triathlon event or for more details, visit www.bsgmultisport.co.za



Potchefstroom triathlete, Erhard Wolfaardt, wins the final race of the 2010 BSG Energade Triathlon Series at Big Bay, Bloubergstrand, Cape Town on Sunday morning, December 5 to be crowned the competition's senior men's champion for the third consecutive year.



Potchefstroom triathlete, Erhard Wolfaardt, sprays the crowd with bubbly after being crowned the 2010 BSG Energade Triathlon Series senior men's champion at Big Bay, Bloubergstrand, Cape Town on Sunday morning, December 5.

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