

# HardTales in the Wild

The First Tri - January 2003

'What am I doing? How did I get myself into this? I have never swum one kilometre in one hit, let alone in open water! This wetsuit doesn't fit, I'm sure it shouldn't be this tight around my neck. Why do I have to wear a swimming cap, it doesn't feel right?' BANG!! A frantic wash of arms and legs, surging toward a distant buoy.

'This is ok, remember to breathe...there's still people to my left and right' The pointy end of the field have struck a rhythm and the group form a wedge. Moving forward with one simple goal, reach the cone before anyone else. 'There are less people beside me now, I must be pulling away? Take a sighting of the can..' Left arm, right arm, short breath, left arm, right arm, look up, left arm 'that can't be right!', right arm, look up, breast stroke..... 'surely I have gone further than this!'

It was at this point I realised the severity of my situation, under prepared and way out classed. I eventually made it to the first cone, after a lot of breaststroke/freestyle. It was only a third of the way though. Fortunately I found my rhythm and managed to swim freestyle all the way back to the shore. I wasn't last, but the girl behind me was. Her name was Tracy and we'd joked about racing for last place before the start... it wasn't as funny now. The crowd were cheering us on though, so I gave a bow. My legs were like jelly as I clambered up the bank toward my trusty borrowed steed. I took my time, reasoning that it wasn't worth rushing for now.

After a couple of kilometres on the bike though, anger set in and I cursed myself for giving in. I pushed hard until the first bit of gravel. The marshals were signalling to slow down and indicated toward a tight left hand corner, it was too late. Washing out from underneath me I clung to the bike in a vain attempt to save it, ouch! With bent bars, less skin and a dented ego I remounted, still in second last.

The next crash was far more spectacular, but no one saw it. I had passed around 20 people and zeroed in on a guy up ahead, I still haven't seen the rock that caught my pedal on a downward stroke.... Once again it wasn't until I was upside down that I realised I couldn't save the situation. It didn't matter, the bike was a mess and I had beat myself up pretty bad by this stage, but you couldn't have taken the smile off my face with a brick!

I passed a bunch more people at the transition to the run leg, I should have pushed harder. The lead guys were about a kilometre from home when I saw them come by, I cheered them on, but knew I would be at least half an hour behind them at the finish. It didn't matter, this was better than any training day I'd had to date.

Stepping it up at the turn around point I figured it didn't matter if I couldn't walk at the end, 'just give it everything Matty!' Each time I reached an aid station I splashed Gatorade over

my head and guzzled water...I'm pretty sure I was meant to do it the other way around, but my heart rate was so high and my temples pounding like a machine gun, shit this is hard work! 8km isn't a long way to run, but it was so hot and this 8km was off the bike after a swim!

There's the finish line, so soon? I've just found my rhythm, maybe there's another lap? Not to be. I guess I'll just have to do the next event and improve my swimming, riding and running. I also need to fix this borrowed bike!

### **Angry Man**

