

ADVANTAGE LE COCQ AT THE OGIER JERSEY TRIATHLON

Triathlon is an action packed sport where the three separate disciplines of swimming, cycling and running are brought together in one race. "Incidents" are commonplace and frequent, but it is very rare that the main talking point occurs before the starters hooter sets the competitors on their way, but so it was at 7.00 am on Sunday morning when the Jersey Triathlon Club held their annual olympic distance Main Event at Bel Royal with over 50 competitors taking part. Pre race favourite, winner for the last two years, and professional triathlete Nick Saunders missed the starting time which immediately added an extra edge to the men's event. Gail King, formerly Merrien, from Guernsey was back to defend her ladies trophy but with two rising German triathlete stars of unknown ability also entered this was unlikely to be a formality.

Phil Le Cornu from race sponsors Ogiers set the competitors on their way into a flat sea and two circuits of a 750 metre triangle in St. Aubins Bay. Steve Price still strong from last weeks third place in the Castle to Harbour swim set a strong pace closely tracked by Doc Snook and Tom Perchard with Nathan Woodland, Nick Le Cocq, Darren Le Masurier and Doug Gorman in their slipstream. Gail King immediately made her intentions known to any would be challengers to her crown in the womans race by blasting out hard from the start of the opening leg. As the swimmers commenced the second circuit, an offshore breeze picked up to test the swimmers on the homeward leg. This benefited strong sea swimmer Steve Price who increased his lead over Doc Snook to exit into transition with a respectable 21 second lead from Snook with Perchard (77 secs), Woodland (2minutes), and Le Cocq (21/2 minutes) chasing hard with their stronger disciplines to follow.

In the ladies race despite opening an impressive gap from the gun, Gail King was not having it all her own way, with the two German girls Mareike Fiebig and Caterina Woolf starting to adapt to the conditions well and maintaining a steady pace and not allowing King to build up too commanding a lead. King held out for a 32 second lead from Fiebig with Woolf a further 4 minutes back entering T1.

The 40km single circuit bike course took the competitors west to Corbiere, along the five mile road and up to Grosnez before travelling back through St. Mary and St Peters Valley to T2. The circuit is a very good test of a cyclists technical ability through some challenging inclines and descents with tight and fast cornering speeds couple with the time trial skills necessary along the five mile road, bal tab loop and St Peters Valley return to transition. With Saunders still wrestling with his alarm clock and Le Cocq looking for the fastest split time on the bike, the race for first place was hotting up. Despite working hard on the bike to maintain his lead, Price was reined in by Snook at Corbiere, Woodland along the five mile road and then Le Cocq at L'etacq. Le Cocq quickly caught and went past Woodland who dug deep to hang onto his rear wheel until they both caught Snook close to St Mary's Church. Snook had enjoyed an excellent domestic season while training for Ironman Nice before injury robbed him of a chance of participating in the race. His return to form was welcome and the demise of his training

partner Saunders might well offer an opportunity on the day. Le Cocq had competed in Ironman Switzerland as well as taking part in good class cycle races over the season. Woodland a skilled triathlete, had not raced triathlon all season due to injury and his form was unknown. Strong cyclists Perchard, Gorman and Luke Walton were also able to stake a claim if the leaders form failed them.

Of the 7 female participants most were looking forward to the bike and run after having endured the worst of the sea conditions in the middle and back of the field.

The race was now well and truly on in the mens race with Le Cocq, Snook and Woodland playing cat and mouse over the last 5 km of the bike course through St. Peters Valley going into T3. The three entered transition together with just 10 km now separating them from the finishing line and first place. Perchard, Walton, and Marc Nicol were now working hard for placings in the top 10 as was Doug Gorman, "Ironman" Anthony Smith and veteran Phil Ahier. In the ladies race King had stretched her lead over Fiebig to 4 ½ minutes after the bike leg and was now looking good for retaining her 2008 trophy. Woolf returned to T3 behind her compatriot with veteran Sarah Corcoran, riding a new bike in competition for the first time a respectable distance behind.

The 10km run was a two leg run to St Aubins and back with Le Cocq a seasoned runner stretching his legs and gradually pulling away from the determined Woodland, and Snook on his least favoured leg dropping away. These positions were held over the 10km run with Le Cocq running out an unexpected but delighted winner in 2 hours 2 minutes and 32 seconds, with Woodland three minutes 20 seconds further back in second and Snook coming home in third. In the ladies race King showing fine form ran away from her challengers to win the trophy for a second successive year in a time of 2 hours 16 minutes and 57 seconds with Fiebig second and Woolf third.

At the after race presentation held at the Noble House, other category winners on the day were Team 73 comprising swimmer Phil Labey, cyclist Adam Wojkicz and runner Tom Brown with the quickest time of the day in 1 hour 57 minutes and nine seconds. First male Veteran and ninth overall was Phil Ahier in a time of 2 hours and 16 minutes with Anthony Smith in second and Phil Terry in third. First female veteran was Sarah Corcoran in 2 hours 34 minutes and 58 seconds.

Club President Simon Dowling gave thanks to the honorary police of St. Lawrence, St. Peter, St. Brelade, St. Mary and St Ouen together with St. Johns Ambulance and all the Marshalls who had voluntarily given of their time on the day to help ensure the success of the race together with Club Sponsors Ogier's.

