

Five (or more) Go Mad In Wellington

by Anne Woodley

The heart of Wellington and the beginning of winter as a hundred odd athletes dusted off their lycra, aero bars and polypropylene for the third running of the Wellington Crazy-(wo)man. Perhaps in deference to Suffrage year the organisers added the (wo) to the original event title to politically correct it, while everyone else just struggled to pronounce it correctly.

Normally scheduled for April, and for the last two years run in consistently icy southerlies, the new organisers were leaving nothing to chance. They put the event on a month later to ensure the standard fare of diabolical weather was sure to be delivered. However no one talked to Penny and Wellington, for a single fleeting weekend, was treated to an Indian summer.

For Wellingtonians the Crazy-(wo)man is more than a race, it is

a social event that rounds off the multi-sporting year in the capital. Most triathletes and multisporters have finished their heavy training and just want to kick back and enjoy winter. For most participants it is a bit of fun, an athletic cocktail party if you like, the triathlete social event of the year. 57 teams made it to the start line on Saturday morning including two school teams, two womens teams and a couple of veterans teams.

However there are always the exceptions that prove the rule, like Wellington based triathlete Neils Madsen. For Madsen this was going to be no weekend training run. He had competed in the event for the last two years, winning the event in 1992 and was back again this year, albeit a few kilo's heavier, to defend his title.

Madsen was one of the 14 individual entries in the event, his

main competition coming from New Zealand Mountain Bike representative Dave Abbott (second in the 1992 event) and 1991 World Triathlete silver medalist Steve Farrell.

In the men's teams it was soon obvious that the race would be between 'Steve Hunt Paint and Panel' and the 'Terminators'. The runners set a blistering pace in the first run starting from the Eastbourne foreshore and covering a lot of masochistic hill climbing up through native bush and through assorted mudbaths before eventually winding down into Wainuiomata.

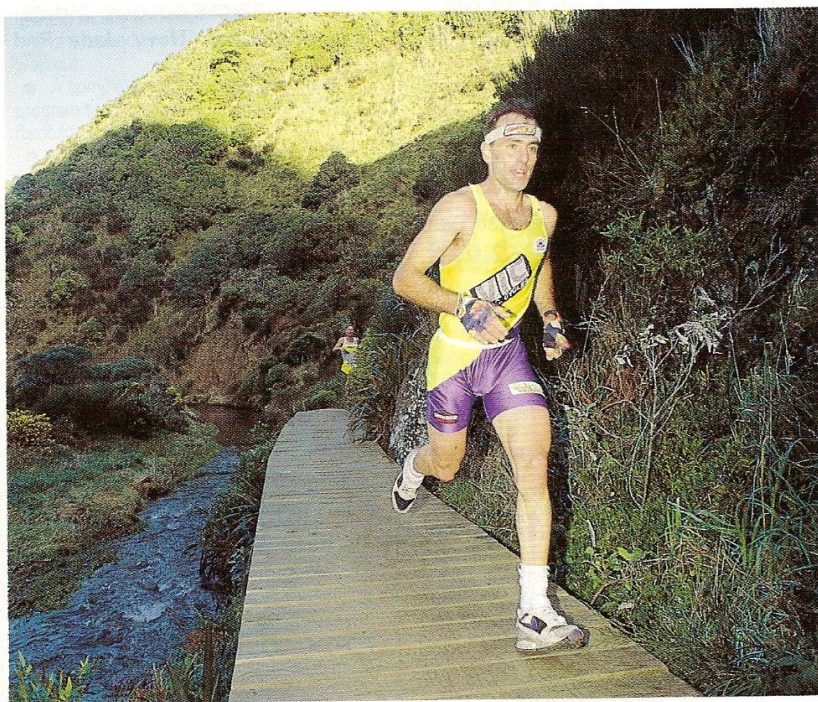
Despite doing almost nothing but mountain biking for the last year, Abbott shot out of the run first individual male and only a couple of minutes off the pace of the leading team runners. Madsen trailed him by less than 30 seconds.

Abbott wasn't too worried, the next stage a 30 kilometre mountain bike through the fire break trails suited him well and he put a buffer of 3 more minutes before getting into the kayak for a short paddle down the Hutt River.

Madsen, in a recently acquired DR, had to be content to trail in second on the first day. He still led easily from third placed individual Steve Elgar. Farrell, playing the role of the dark horse perfectly, sat quietly in fifth pace, 21 minutes off the pace.

Jenny Cassie of Women's team 'The Suffragettes' established an early lead in the run over their rivals 'On Sommes Nous' and maintained it for the rest of the race.

Lack of marshalling or route indicators at one significant corner in the run meant that a few less than amused runners had a bit of orienteering practice before getting back on track including the team runner for mixed team 'Labola'. The mistake gave 'Paula's Plodders'



Dave Abbott makes his way up Belmont Hill on Day Two Photo Rob Greenaway

an easy lead.

Farrell wasn't expected to be much of a threat on the second day. It began with a knee wrenching run up through bush to finally reach exposed farmland and one of the best views of Wellington from the top of Mt Belmont. After the run's finish back down in the Hutt Valley, it was on to road bikes for a 60km ride up the valley then over Haywards Hill to Paekakariki before heading back to the Pauatahanui Inlet. It was the significant paddle round the Pauatahanui inlet finishing at Titahi Bay that was expected to knock Farrell out of contention. 'I only paddle to get the pauas off the reef outside my house', he admits.

To have any chance he had to make up all his time in the run and the bike, but day one had 'absolutely stuffed' him.

If the individuals were tired, the team runners from 'Steve Hunt Paint and Panel' and 'Terminators' were again doing their Carl Lewis impressions. Both Madsen and Abbott were having problems.

Madsen had been looking forward to the road bike until he realised he had forgotten to change the cluster on his bike. 'It was a bit of a grovel up to Paekakariki and it took a hell of a lot out of my

legs, but after that there was a tail wind to the kayak transition'. For Abbott the cycle was just a grovel.

Farrell burst into the kayak transition with a mission. He had passed a laboring Abbott early on but knew he couldn't afford to be complacent. He had 20 minutes to make up from day one and neither Abbott or Madsen are known to be slouches in a boat.

Abbott had recovered by the time he reached his boat and managed to pass Madsen who had tipped out in the unforgiving chop that was building up.

It was enough for Abbott to retain his first placing but the mistakes cost Madsen. Farrell's performance lifted him by a slender 50 seconds to secure second place. **NZ▲**

RESULTS

Open Men

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|---------------|---------|
| 1. D. Abbott | 9.34.43 |
| 2. S. Farrell | 9.44.02 |
| 3. N. Madsen | 9.44.55 |

Veteran Men

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| 1. Bill Crawley | 11.06.34 |
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Women Teams

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|---------------------|----------|
| 1. The Suffragettes | 12.01.43 |
| 2. On Somme Nous | 12.35.51 |

School Teams

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|-------------------------|----------|
| 1. Oops Wrong Race | 10.29.15 |
| 2. Sacred Heart College | 13.38.38 |

Veteran Team

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| 1. A Rose Between Two Thorns | 10.40.25 |
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Two Man Teams

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|------------------------|----------|
| 1. The Paxus Continuum | 10.39.50 |
| 2. FK Roofing Boys | 10.56.50 |
| 3. Nigel No Friends | 11.17.26 |

Three/Four Man Teams

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|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Steve Hunt Paint and Panel | 8.43.58 |
| 2. Terminators | 8.45.53 |
| 3. Gluttons for Punishment | 9.21.53 |

Mixed Teams

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|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. The Return of Paula's Plodders | 9.31.05 |
| 2. Labola | 10.00.49 |
| 3. Three Dudes and a Dud | 10.12.42 |



Steve Farrell, looking for pauas. Photo Rob Greenaway.