

Repeat Winners Amid Wild Weather

The 33rd Fine Signs Crazyman was one to remember, with near perfect racing conditions crowning a repeat and first time winner of the Wellington region's longest running multisport event.

Crazyman 2024 dawned mild with only middling winds that saw several race records around the demanding 54k route around the Hutt Valley. A highlight was a first time Crazyman appearance for four-time Coast to Coast champion, Sam Clark. Although the Whakatane athlete didn't have it all his own way.

Opening with a 13k kayak from Eastbourne across Wellington Harbour and up the Hutt River, Clark was impressive in staying with Olympic kayaker Kurtis Imrie, although both men trailed local team kayaker Troy Brooke whose time of 1hr 01min 07secs missed the kayak course record by just 20secs.

Not far behind these front three came Whanganui teenager Alexis Toy, who at 1hr 10min 49secs was the fastest female paddler. This gave her teenage teammates a lead they would never relinquish on their way to winning the overall multisport team title.

Onto mountain bikes for the 28k up the Hutt River Trail and across Belmont Regional Park, the fastest rider proved to be duathlon team rider Gavin McCarthy with a new course record of 1hr 16min 20secs that set up My Ride Wellington teammate Matt Cryer to claim the duathlon team title.

The fastest female mountain biker was duathlon individual, Mary-Ann Moller, who clocked 1hr 27min 28secs on her way to a women's record for the overall duathlon of 2hrs 53min 57secs.

In the feature multisport individual race, meanwhile, Sam Clark was under attack from Wellington-based South African, Bruce Hughes. Clark enjoyed a two-minute lead at the start of the ride, but Hughes proved slightly faster to set up an exciting foot race in the final 13k trail run through Korokoro Stream to the Petone Foreshore Finish line.

Clark, however, was just too classy. Clocking 1hr 06min 17secs for the fastest run of the day, he would cross the line with 6min 54secs in hand, stopping the clock just 2min 18secs shy of the course record with 3hrs 33min 05secs. Behind him, Bruce Hughes held on to second place ahead of Ryan Tait.

For women's winner, Ruth Cornelius, there was a hint of deja-vu. The Wellington adventure-race specialist won here in 2020 and was even more dominant in 2024. Whanganui's Abbey Hurley pushed her during the kayak and held a 10sec lead as they started mountain biking, but Cornelius took control straight and would eventually win by almost 20min in 4hrs 26min 56secs. Behind her Hurley held on well for second ahead of Kapiti's Yvonne Winn.



Established in 1991, the Fine Signs Crazyman is one of New Zealand's longest-running multisport races. This year more than 200 athletes from as far afield as Wanaka, Auckland and Australia lined up for the Lower Hutt event.

One person who has seen it all is Crazyman life member Les Morris. Until 2023, Morris was the only person to have finished every Crazyman when a triple bypass saw him sidelined. But he was back this year as part of social multisport team with mates.

Others familiar with multisport history were Gary Moller (Wgtn) and Maura Skilton (Whanganui), who were the eldest participants at 71 and 65 respectively and also won their duathlon and multisport super masters categories.

For full results visit: www.crazyman.co.nz/history.



Above: Sam Clark (Photo: Dan Jones)
Left: Ruth Cornelius (Photo: marathonphotos.live)