

Media Release

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CANADIAN STAR PROVIDES UPSET WIN IN SYDNEY

Canada's Paula Findlay has surprised everyone, especially herself, to win the opening round of the Dextro Energy Triathlon ITU World Championship Series in Sydney.

Findlay charged ahead in the final 200 metres of the run leg to defeat defending champion Barbara Riveros Diaz of Chile in a time of 2:01.21 with New Zealand's Andrea Hewitt in third.

It was a disappointing day for the two favoured Aussies, with Emma Moffatt completing the journey in 13th place whilst Beijing Olympic champion Emma Snowsill was well back in 42nd.

Of the other Aussies, Felicity Abram was 15th, Emma Jackson 24th, Felicity Sheedy-Ryan 41st and Annabel Luxford 43rd.

"It's an amazing feeling to win here," Findlay said.

"The race went well. I felt really good going into the run leg but there were so many surges it was hard to know exactly what was going to happen," she added.

Findlay was always well placed throughout the journey and broke away with five other athletes to fight out the placings – in fact the run leg became a six woman breakaway from early on in the 10 kilometre final leg.

The 2000 Olympic Games host city put on a magnificent day for the start of the race with temperatures hovering in the early 20's with some scattered cloud cover providing comfortable respite as the cream of the worlds triathletes dived into what became quite choppy water at Farm Cove outside the Sydney Opera House.

But, by the time the athletes had transitioned into the bike and run legs, heavy cloud overtook Sydney, dropping temperatures and in doing so, making conditions for racing ideal.

In scenes reminiscent of those "best ever Olympics" Sydneysiders packed the various vantage points to watch the world's best perform against such an iconic backdrop. Something that race winner Findlay thought was terrific.

"That crowd was just amazing. It was great to have the age-groupers compete before us which meant they all stayed around and watched, and the men's race is on after ours so everyone is making so much noise. It was hard at the end because all I could hear was their cheering.

"I didn't want to look around," she laughed.

It was clearly a day to forget for the Australian contingent. Despite a supportive home crowd, the 'two Emmas' Moffatt and Snowsill, were never really in contention.

Moffatt was briefly in the leading pack at the start of the run leg however she quickly faded.

“I got a stitch and found it really hard,” Moffatt recalled.

“It all comes down to the run leg in these races and I just couldn’t go. I started to get a bit of pain towards the end of the bike leg but it doesn’t matter so much on the bike. When I started running it was clearly going to be a problem.

“Maybe it was a bit of fatigue from Mooloolaba, I’m not sure,” she added.

Moffatt has been competing at the elite level for long enough to know that there is a positive to be found in every performance.

“It’s clear I have to improve on that if I want to go well in the series,” she said.

“It was not the result I wanted, especially at home where you naturally want to go well.

The result was even more of a body blow to Olympic champion Snowsill who was left shattered – both physically and emotionally after the race.

In fact it was some time after the race before she was able to speak to the media, and when she did, she was still shaking off the after effects of a gut-busting performance.

The event started poorly with a below par effort in the swim leg and she battled to regain touch with the leading pack throughout the bike and run legs.

“I’m just completely empty,” she said.

“I don’t know what happened in the swim. It was really really choppy which made it hard but I thought I was going alright. I must have been a little off-course or something because I just found myself at the back of the pack,” she added.

While not making excuses, Snowsill revealed she had been battling a heavy cold in the past fortnight that may have taken its toll in the lead up to her first race of the season.

“The first race is always the hardest but I was really flat. I did put a lot of pressure on myself competing in Sydney but I’m really not sure what happened.

Snowsill was that lethargic she even contemplated pulling out of the event at various stages.

“Plenty of times, actually. These things are always a battle of wills though and I just kept thinking that I’m in a race and you just can’t get race conditions in training.

Despite her lowly placing, Snowsill could find a positive.

“I know my body and I’m not worried with the end result. I actually started to get my legs going towards the back end of the run leg so that’s good I suppose,” she offered.

Even though her victory in the opening round of the series was an emphatic one, Findlay is not going to get too far ahead of herself in thinking about what it all means.

"It's early in the season and there's lots of racing to go, but I suppose the thing is now that I'm in front and everyone is chasing me," she said.

The Dextro Energy ITU World Triathlon Series continues in Japan next month with a further 4 events before the Grand Final in China in September.

RESULTS

NAME	FINISH	SWIM	CYCLE	RUN
1. Paula Findlay	CAN 02:01:21	22:13	01:03:12	34:43
2. Barbara Riveros Diaz	CHI 02:01:24	22:21	01:02:59	34:54
3. Andrea Hewitt	NZL 02:01:29	22:05	01:03:18	35:00
4. Carole Peon	FRA 02:01:39	22:18	01:03:05	35:04
5. Tomoko Sakimoto	JPN 02:01:40	22:16	01:03:10	35:01
6. Laura Bennett	USA 02:01:59	21:55	01:03:28	35:27
7. Ai Ueda	JPN 02:02:02	22:45	01:02:39	35:25
8. Liz Blatchford	GBR 02:02:32	22:00	01:03:22	35:56
9. Lisa Norden	SWE 02:02:36	22:18	01:03:06	36:05
10. Lauren Campbell	CAN 02:02:43	22:28	01:02:59	36:10