

RACE REPORT: Kieran Roche

2XU Super Sprint Race Weekend
Runaway Bay, 12-14 December 2008

So I headed up to Runaway Bay on the Gold Coast to compete in round one of the Australian Junior Triathlon Series, a nation wide competition for all under 19 athletes. The weekend qualified the top 6 place getters for the Youth Olympics, so as you can imagine, all the big name were out to compete. As for me, this was to be my first taste of the AJTS and at the age of 16, I was just looking for a bit of experience and went into the weekend with no expectations.

The weekend had 4 races in 3 days. The first was an enduro Aquathon (200m swim, 1200m run, 200m swim, 1200m run). Being such a short race, every second counted and positions were very close. I raced the first half of the race well, always being fairly close to the leaders, but after having a strong second swim I could not find my running legs again, losing me valuable time and positions. Altogether, race one showed that I have the ability to swim with the leaders but my run legs are not as developed as some of the older guys.

Race Two was the first draft legal triathlon. This was the first race where I got to put my new Argon 18 Krypton to the test. After missing the leading bunch due to a slow transition, I cycled in a small bunch, not as quick as the leading bunch. Straight away I noticed how responsive the bike is, and how much easier it was getting up the hills. With one hairpin each lap, I was also impressed with the Krypton's ability to accelerate out of the turn. I backed this up with a solid run but overall my time suffered due to not being in a faster bunch as I would have liked.

The third race was a draft-free Time Trial, with athletes leaving 30 seconds apart. It rained right before the race and so the track was pretty wet. I was very fatigued for this race but still put together a reasonable performance.

With good performances in the first three races, I qualified myself into the B final. This last race was the Grand final of the series round and the distances were longer than the previous races. I found myself in a quality field at the start of the race, but managed to break away from the main pack in the short 400m swim. On the bike I was in a breakaway with 3 other riders. The wind

was strong and the day was very hot. We had a large group chasing behind us. About half way in the cycle, one of the guys in the breakaway got a flat, but we continued to push on, holding back the large chase group who were working hard behind us. Our breakaway ended the cycle still in front of the main pack, who weren't far behind. The Krypton performed well the whole race which set me up for a good run. I had a fast transition and got out onto the 8 lap run in the lead. I stayed leading the pack for 3 laps, until a pack from the chase group eventually caught up. I had troubles trying to stick with their older, experienced run legs and ended up dropping from the pack. I was first out of the small breakaway pack in the run, until slowing at a drink station where I just got passed. I eventually finished the race, coming in 8th position out of 16 in the B final.

I finished the weekend in 26th position overall (in the under 19s) and 2nd out of all the under 16s. Overall, it was an awesome weekend of racing and I look forward to my next race, the NSW Pro Tour at Kurnell in mid January, then another AJTS race in Canberra.

For now

Kieran

