

Media Release



1 November 2009

## **Atkinson defends title – Jackson claims first**

Courtney Atkinson has ended his 2009 campaign on a winning note, successful defending his title after a long season, while teenager Emma Jackson claimed her first major victory over her more fancied rivals at the Noosa Triathlon this morning.

An appreciative crowd turned out to see Atkinson win his second title but he had to come from behind after crashing on the bike leg just 5km from home. Another chapter was written into the record books as yet a different Emma emerged as one of Australia's leading female athletes. This time it was not the Olympic champion, Emma Snowsill or world champion Emma Moffatt but the next generation, Emma Jackson.

Atkinson emerged with the lead group of swimmers after the 1.5km swim, which included James Seear who finished third last year, Josh Amberger and Clayton Fettell.

Light rain had fallen during the morning to make conditions slippery on the bike leg but it was Fettell who tried to inflict some damage on the group to try and break them up but they had him covered over the testing 40km cycle leg.

"The race didn't pan out exactly how I wanted. I had a race plan to dominate the bike leg and stamp my authority.

"I had a spill on my bike; I pushed too hard and made a stupid mistake. My first thought was anger. I really didn't need to push that hard when I knew I had a good run left in me," said Atkinson.

The fall had cost Atkinson nearly a minute heading into the final 10km run. Seear led for a good part of the run with young Amberger also keeping pace.

But Atkinson is a world class athlete, not panicking and slowly closed the gap to take the lead just past the half way mark.

"I bolted out of transition as fast as I could, the first three kilometres was as good as I've done. When I got to the 7km mark I started to stiffen up but I knew I was home and host.

"I'll be back next year, three in a row would be real nice," said Atkinson.

Seear went one place better than last year to claim second with Amberger rounding out the podium. Fettell faded in the run, after his effort last week at the world long course titles took its toll.

"I was happy today, it's one better than last year and maybe next year I can go one better again. I thought if I could hold on during the bike then I'd have a chance.

When Courtney fell I thought that may have been an opportunity but he's got good form at the moment and he was too strong," said Seear.

Jackson also came from behind for her breakthrough win in just her fourth Olympic distance triathlon and first in the elite category.

Jackson is a member of Australia's Junior Elite squad, recently claiming a silver medal at the World Triathlon Championships on the Gold Coast back in September as a junior.

Pre race favourite Annabel Luxford was one of the first to emerge from the water with Pip Taylor and Jackson. They had a 40 second break over the chasing pack in the early stages of the bike leg.

Then a group containing dual age group world champion Carrie Lester, Sarah Crowley, third at Noosa last year, three-time Olympian Kiyomi Niwata and Switzerland's Caroline Steffen.

Lester was the big mover on the bike working her way into the lead group by the turn around point, this group of five remained together until the second transition.

Once out onto the 10km run leg Jackson made her move and was too good for the rest of the field. Luxford suffering the effects of a virus the past week just didn't have the speed and was passed by Crowley with just 3km to go.

"I am very proud to win this race in front of so many people. The swim was tough and so was the bike but I knew if I could get onto the lead group I would have a strong run.

"It's a great confidence booster going into next season," said Jackson.

Jackson will spend 2-3 months overseas and race on a French Team over shorter distances.

Triathlon Australia's head coach, Shaun Stephens, said it puts her in elite company and certainly is set to put pressure on our more experienced girls leading into the London Olympics.



It was a harder day at the office for Luxford today suffering the effects of a nasty virus.

"I couldn't go fast today, I just didn't have it, I felt flat." When Emma came up on my shoulder early in the run I just couldn't respond.

It's hard to play catch up when you haven't eaten properly since Monday night. I had a good break after the World Championships and can now look at getting back into some hard training," said Luxford.

A further 7000 triathletes were also part of the 27<sup>th</sup> Noosa Triathlon this morning competing as individuals or part of a team. Some notables included former world champion and two-time Noosa champion Emma Carney, who still holds the race record she set back 1997. Also successfully completing his first triathlon running icon Steve Moneghetti and wife Tanya.

## Results

### Men

1.	Courtney Atkinson	Gold Coast	1:47:03
2.	James Seear	Brookfield	1:48:14
3.	Joshua Amberger	Everton Hills	1:48:53
4.	Clayton Fettell	Alstonville	1:49:14
5.	Jason Woolhouse	Richmond	1:50:18

### Women

1.	Emma Jackson	Joyner	2:01:02
2.	Sarah Crowley	Lawnton	2:01:50
3.	Annabel Luxford	Brisbane	2:02:33
4.	Carrie Lester	Buddina	2:03:25
5.	Caroline Steffen	Mooloolaba	2:03:33

A two-minute (120 seconds) highlights package of each day's action will be distributed from Noosa.

**Sunday's feed will be available via ATN 7 Sydney at 3.00pm (AEDST) Sunday (2.00pm Qld). All local stations will need to access the feed from their Sydney affiliate**

The voiced packages will be sent, followed by a re-feed of the package containing just FX and interview tracks, for your use. All the information you require, including intros, scripts and supers will be emailed to your sports department, in order to meet your deadlines.

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