

Lisa Morrison & Richard Greer – Coast to Coast 2010

The Coast to Coast was a weekend of unexpected changes and unexpected results for the Icebreaker/Complete Performance mixed team. In fact, one of the only things they did expect was that they would both go hard and do the best they could.



The build up to the race was not ideal, with Lisa living in Te Anau and paddling on the lake all summer. The limitations of a choppy lake seemed to magnify as the horror stories of the Rockgardens reached the Deep South! Luckily, a cruise down the gorge the week before the race 'got her mojo back!'

Bunch riding was a distant memory, having to cycle mostly alone for three months. Thankfully, it's just like riding a bike. Lisa was fortunate though, at least she knew what she was getting into.

Richard was called into the team three weeks before the race, meaning some serious training was needed...fast. Lisa was a little put out when Richard explained that his last run for more than one hour was in 2008...but she had faith! Richard's legs were unimpressed about being reminded what three hour runs feel like, admitting that he 'walked around like John Wayne for four days afterwards'.



The trip over to Kumara was hilarious, with Boyzone and Avril Lavigne having the help of some enthusiastic back up singers in Lisa, Richard and Kylie. Unfortunately, this backfired – Richard had Ronan Keating singing gloriously in his head the whole way up the Deception. But he claimed that The Wiggles were actually quite good to have in your head coming down the Mingha!

Arriving at Kumara, it was tent pitching and gear sorting time. Kylie, their usually very organised and intelligent support crew, was surprised to learn that the Coast to Coast does not start with a kayak section. She quickly agreed to read the race handbook before bed. Meanwhile, Richard had discovered that he'd forgotten his all important cup and bungy for drinking from the rivers. He set to work, cutting an R & R Sport drink bottle in half and hacking some bungy off a spare running pack. Lisa thought the strapping tape covering the rough edge of the bottle was a nice touch, and very resourceful.

The antics continued at the pre race dinner, with Richard attempting to charm the older Kumara ladies into letting him have TWO dessert bowls. Needless to say, he returned with just one portion control bowl. The same ladies thought Lisa should be psychologically tested, after she enthusiastically claimed that she does Coast to Coast just to be able to eat the amazing trifle the night before.

A vital lesson was learned at the Racecourse. The team had smugly pitched the tent away from the crowds, behind the stables and along the fence. It turned out that perhaps everyone else had thought of something they hadn't...trucks came past about every fifteen minutes during the night. The trucks were so close and so noisy that all three sleepily thought they were going to get run over. No alarms were needed to wake them at 5am.



Lisa rattled off all the advice Richard had given her over the last few days before leaving for the start line. Things like 'run really hard, ride fast to catch up to some people, focus on what is happening right now, not in the future.' Richard reminded her to most importantly have fun, so it was a very relaxed Lisa wandering down to the beach. The first run went by without drama, and Lisa managed to get in a group after the long down hills not far

from Kumara. Her positive but firm attempts to get the bunch working together were unsuccessful, with everyone apparently happy to do nothing and save themselves. So Lisa was left to do a lot of work on the front, which she paid for later on. One of the short hill climbs was just a bit much and she dropped off the back. However, the thought of Richard waiting in transition was enough to get down on the drops and push hard down the hill to get back on. Later, there was a frighteningly close call between two riders in front which was thankfully avoided. The only casualty was Lisa's rear light which bounced off crossing the railway, but she was definitely not stopping! Running into transition with a big grin on her face, babbling about what fun she'd had was enough to send a fired up Richard bounding into the mountain run.



Richard had a great time focussing on ticking off lots of competitors through the mountain run, and was especially stoked to see most of the Complete Performance athletes along the way. He decided that crossing rivers cautiously and steadily was very overrated, opting for the more exhilarating tumble and swim approach. Richard was delighted to discover a peach flavoured Leppin amongst his usual choice. But his delight soon dissolved (along with his stomach) as he realised it was well past its used by date. Things got even more interesting with cramp in Big Boulders and no doubt several competitors were horrified to be passed even though he was in such agony! Another mixed team runner thoughtfully offered Richard some Cramp stop, to which he politely declined and swiftly made tracks. Fortunately, he managed to overcome the cramp by "relaxing"... perhaps this is a technique Richard could share with the rest of us?

The start of the cycle at Klondyke Corner on Saturday morning was pretty chaotic. There were hundreds of nervous and tired looking riders plodding out to the start line. This is not unusual, but the pouring rain made it more frantic. Everyone was head to toe in rain jackets, pants, hats, gloves and even gumboots. That is, everyone except Richard. Right before the start, he decided that this gear was entirely unnecessary, and that he'd prefer the summer look. Off came the hat, gloves, jacket, and thermals. It turned out to be a very strategic choice because just 25 kilometres into the ride, the rain eased. The plan was to attack right from the start, and with no one else in the group willing to join him, Richard set about chasing down the field one by one.

He absolutely motored through the 85 kilometre ride to Waddington. Kylie and Lisa had tried to convince Richard to be 'careful' on the downhill, but had to settle for his promise to be 'steady'. One of the highlights was blasting down a hill near Castle Hill Village and nailing the least pot-hole line over the



one way bridge. He was going so fast that there was no need to pedal up the hill on other side! Wouldn't it be great if all hills were like that? There were times on other hills that Richard offered to relieve the marshals of their duties...provided they'd take over his ride. Not surprisingly, no one jumped at the chance.

Lisa had nervous shaky legs (is that normal??) waiting in transition. But with a speedy change over she was soon barrelling down the Old West Coast road. Working with an individual, they managed to catch a small bunch a few kilometres in. From then on it was a smooth and fast ride into town. The police were fantastic coming down Memorial Ave. Hurling into transition, it was announced that they were coming first in their category. Lisa was stoked and ran fast down to the boats. But she quickly realised that her boat was missing and Richard and Kylie weren't there. Trying to keep calm, it was 5-10 minutes before they came sprinting with the boat. It was a stressful transition and Lisa took off really fired up but panicked about the lost time. With strong words from Kylie, she managed to convert that into positive energy. A solid paddle followed, dominating her new Rosie Shakespeare technique. It was tough battling the weed (at times there was more punting than paddling) but it was nice to avoid the carnage that the Waimak dishes out.



With plenty of time to get to the end of the paddle, the support crew of Richard, Kylie, Mark, John and Jim had been practicing the transition. So it was a super slick changeover onto the bike and definitely made up for the last one! The final 10 kilometres around the Sumner were tough but fast. Lisa was determined not to get any punctures and kept inflated by riding outside the cycle lane (while of course being considerate to drivers!) Lisa made every second count up the chute and it was a very happy team and support crew at the finish line.

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