

Sally Doherty - Round Taupo 2010

HOT! HOT! HOT!

Remember that song that we all jived to in nightclubs when we were young? – welllll, it was hot, even at 5.30am it was hot!!!!

Saturday 27 November 2010 all the training for the past months was about to hopefully come together and get me across the finish line in a relatively decent time. Somebody forgot to tell the weatherman to deliver us a few clouds!!! – man we are picky!!

Breakfast completed – of course extremely healthy in plenty of time for digestion to kick in, extra pieces of bread with peanut butter and I was off on my trusty steed down to the start line a mere 3km away – that was the shortest 3km I have ever done... must have been downhill.



Let's wind the clock back abit to share some history as I have been asked to do.

I took up cycling in January 2008 when I entered into the 35km Sub event at Spencer Park. That was fun and I enjoyed it. Next came Girls on Bikes (GOB) February 2010 and then half of Lake Brunner in April 2010. October of 2009 I decided to give triathlons a go (previously having entered as part of a team in swimming only) and completed the PhysioMed series. That was my sum total of eventing. GOB was a disappointing ride for me, felt I could have done much better but I overtrained and hit the wall about 2 weeks out- legs would not do as they were told. Brunner was OK but struggled again. I knew I could do better.

After Brunner, was talking with my relay partner who did part of Taupo in 2009 – after hearing all about it, was keen to do it as a relay. The relay thing fell to pieces so I decided to bite the bullet and do it solo!!!

I had been viewing the CP website and decided to get along to the Spin classes in winter this year. That would have been about July I started having done very little riding all winter – and man I nearly died – where is the oxygen Debbie!!! _ I even think I gave Debbie a fright – very nearly puked that first session – BUT – I loved it and stuck to it. That was my secret training weapon. Rock on September 4 2010 and the earthquake put paid to that form of training. By this time I had decided to get a training programme in place and Debbie was the chosen one!!!. Sorry about that Deb.

At one session of Spin, we were chatting away and someone suggested I should do the Wild Coaster – twas a great training ride for Taupo. That was put in the programme and I promptly forgot about it as seemed so far away. All of a sudden it was upon me and I had to do it – Debbie said I was ready – I had other thoughts... I have very little to add to Dean Johnstones report on that event – there wasn't much to be positive about it that is for sure, just to say I did it and taking everything into account, in not too bad a time for me. Pretty much bang on Debbies estimate!. It was FOUL!!!. It was then I found out how mentally tough one can be and that has put me in great stead for future training sessions and anything I do. Anyway, over and done with, move on.

Of course by then the CP sessions had moved outside and that was another thing to deal with – I was fine when with my mates but was left well behind when with the CP group – damn I hate that. Tossed my toys a couple of times especially when I felt I was going backwards some days on the hills. Stood in the shower one morning and gave myself a very severe talking to – this was two weeks out from Wildcoaster so knew I had to get it together. The next CP session was awesome – I was on fire.... Bring on the good feelings!

Right – that event has now been ticked off and honestly, I doubt whether I would do it again but hey, who knows. Trainings were getting harder, longer, faster in some sessions etc. Man!!!

Lots of highs and lows while training. The last couple of weeks just flew by, plus fitting in the first session of the Physio Med tri and managing to come out with a 2 minute pb from last year so was pretty happy about that.

And here we are now at the startline. OMG!!!

Debbie had estimated 6.00 to 6.25 – I was ever hopeful and put myself into the start group an hour quicker (also on advice from others) - huh – that was a joke as it turned out. Waiting under the HOT sun seemed to last forever and we were late starting but finally it was all on!!!.– I had read the profile but am still not too sure where that first hill came from just out of Taupo – you look at the profile but you don't see!!!! – man the heart was pumping then. And so it continued for the first 80 kms of the event – hills on hills on hills – they just kept coming at me... To this I will say that with technique tweaking and damn hard work, I managed to get up them in not too bad a condition. I would also like to add that the first 20kms were the only time there were two riders side by side – not bit of bunch riding did I do for the whole 160km – I was truly flying SOLO!!!! Weird – 10,000 people and not one bunch in sight. Oh well, there goes that theory to help me along, I could see the time just running away from me. Just another thing to contend with was melting tar on the tyres – fun!

When you talk to people about the course, I can't understand why they are not more honest and just say – it is tough, lotsa hills and a grunt in some places. That is life I guess!!!. Anyway, thank you to those who told me to enjoy the scenery, listen to your body, don't go balls out at the start etc. I really listened to my body this time as am prone to getting migraines so knew water was a major for me – hence every water stop, I stopped and refuelled hydration pack and water bottle – man lotsa liquid went in, but lots was sweated out, so at the end, no headache. Was very sore down one

side after the first 40kms and had a really good stretch out at that point – again it would have been crippling if I hadn't. I think a trip to the physio is now the order of the day!! Heaps of food eaten, go Ems Power Cookies, the liquid gel is amazing and helped heaps. Views were spectacular.

Did I mention the size of the hills, those suckers are huge – long and go on forever- tis an amazing sight to see riders spread out for miles chugging their way up. And here is where I get to boast – the last hill, Hatepe is well, huge at that stage of the event. And here comes me on my trusty steed, talking away frantically to myself, correcting technique, positive thinking, comparing with hills at Greymouth and lo and behold, here I am happily spinning away up the hill and passing all and sundry in sight – and that means lotsa men – god that felt good, could not get the smile off my face!!!. I owned that hill!!!!

The next best part was coming into Taupo – I guess 15kms out the end was in sight. I knew then I could do this thing and just prayed for no flat tyres (there were heaps of them). Could I sprint from here, maybe not, OK 10kms? Perhaps – give it a go as getting over it and everything touching the seat was hurting!!! Head down, low on drops and lets go.....wow, that was great – yelling out – “coming through” , into the finish shute and man I was flying – looked up and here I am on the big screen and they announced my name – I burst into tears and pumped the old fist in the air – that was the highlight – and just then I heard “Well done Sal” and recognised my brothers voice who had travelled down from further north – the tears were really flowing then!!!.

Wow this has been a big espistle, sorry, but I just so elated to have completed this and want to point out to anyone out there with a decent amount of self belief, determination/ stubbornness, commitment , you can do this event. No denying it, it is tough and in hindsight I should really have done Long Bays x2 in one ride rather than cheating and finishing off the ride on a flat road!!!– that was my fault and I can now see why that was in my programme.

Huge thanks to Debbie for all your patience and support – I would not have got there that is for sure if not for your help and guidance.

Time wise – not flash at all – I am happy to say time on bike was 6.35 but actual time on the finish line substantially longer. Such is life and the big plus is that I made it, I can tick that off my “TO DO” list before I hit 50 in 2 months and I have a very proud family and I am very proud of what I have done. Would I do it again – well, as someone said, tis abit like being in labour (sorry guys), during it you will never go back and do it again, after it, the memory fades pretty quickly and it all doesn't seem as bad, so who knows.....

Girls can do anything!!!!!!