

Rookie & Repeat Wins At Porirua Grand Traverse

Almost 700 participants from all ends of New Zealand turned out for 17th Porirua Grand Traverse, and when the dust had settled a local standout had announced herself as the hot new thing on New Zealand's multisport scene.

The epic kayaking, mountain biking and mountain running event around the hills, harbour and coastlines of Porirua City shrugged off continuing covid woes to live up to its reputation as one of Capital region's favourites. In 2019 it won the Wellington Community Award for Sport and Recreation thanks to a multi-faceted appeal that embraces the community while showcasing the districts awesome but unsung outdoor resource.

Deb Lynch knows how special Porirua is. The local Plimmerton athlete trains on the spectacular hills, harbour and coastlines and bush trail every day and utilised that local knowledge to take out her first major multisport win at the Porirua Grand Traverse.

Victory isn't new to Lynch. As a standout triathlete and runner she has represented New Zealand on the international scene since her teens. But this foray into multisport, where she finished third overall less than 20min behind the men's winner, marked the 30-year-old as a potential Coast to Coast winner in 2023.

The men's race wasn't soft either. Lachie Brownlie from Nelson, a regular top-10 placegetter at Coast to Coast, took his third Porirua Grand Traverse title ahead of masters winner Dean Ford, who himself has been top 10 at Coast to Coast. Brownlie won by 9min in 4hrs 31min 36secs for the 12k kayak, 28k mountain bike and 18k trail run. By comparison, Lynch – a relative kayak and mountain bike novice - trailed by 10min in the boat and mountain bike, but lost only 30secs to Brownlie on foot to finish in 4hrs 50min 16secs.

In a race that was six weeks later than normal due to the second covid postponement in three years, race day turned out near perfect. The event features multiple options, including a 9k fun run walk that was won by outstanding Lower Hutt 11-year-old, Jacob Williams, in 36min 08secs. Another outstanding aspect was nearby Tawa Intermediate setting a nationwide example with a turnout of 83 students and 10 teachers.

The Duathlon option was dominated by Wellington's Arran Whiteford and Lower Hutt's Katie Smith. The PGT is also a family affair, with local former New Zealand rep mountain biker Wayne

Hiscock teaming with neighbour Kirsty Wallace to win the team duathlon while his son Cohen took out the junior mountain bike. Wellington club, Windy City Multisport, excelled in the multisport teams to win both the open and mixed categories.

In 2023 the 18th anniversary Porirua Grand Traverse is scheduled for Sunday 2nd April.



Deb Lynch

Lachie Brownlee

