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Emma saves best for Chicago

By Amanda Lulham
August 31, 2004



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PINT-SIZED triathlete Emma Snowsill yesterday scored a breakthrough victory on American soil with her win in the biggest triathlon in the world.

Snowsill's victory signalled the start of a day of Australian dominance at the Accenture Chicago triathlon with Sydney's Craig Alexander winning the men's race and Snowsill's boyfriend Craig Walton finishing third.

Snowsill was a controversial omission from the Australian Olympic team in February.

Selectors opted for teenager Maxine Seear over the then reigning world champion. Yesterday's victory in the Chicago triathlon, which dates back to 1983 and is regarded as one of the major events on the American calendar, was Snowsill's first American victory.

The 162cm Queenslander produced her trademark blistering run to beat New Zealander Evelyn Williamson, American Rebecch Wassner and 1990 and 1995 world champion Karen Smyers, also from the US.

But even before the race start, the odds were against triathlon couple Snowsill and Walton making it a double on the day.

A jet-lagged Walton, also bypassed for Olympics selection, only arrived in the US a day before the race, weary from his second in the UK half ironman.

Walton, who competed in the UK race to secure a berth in this year's Hawaii ironman triathlon in October, still managed to produce a strong performance in the event he has won three times.

The swim/bike specialist had opened up a 2½ minute lead on the men's field at the end of the cycle leg but was passed by fellow Aussie Alexander 4km into the run.