

Herald Sun

Women lead medal charge.

2005 ITU Mooloolaba World Cup.

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ONE OF the strongest, one of the smallest and one of the tallest female triathletes in the world yesterday gave Australia its second clean sweep of a World Cup podium in three weeks.

While Australia's new dream team of Loretta Harrop, Emma Snowsill and Annabel Luxford dominated the women's race, Canberra Olympian Simon Thompson overcame severe jet lag to claim his first World Cup win and compatriot Courtney Atkinson became the No. 2 ranked World Cup athlete with his second placing.

Between them, they won 5 of the 6 medals on offer on one of the world's toughest courses to regain for Australia its mantle as the world's top triathlon nation.

Australia is the only nation to have achieved so many medals -- a different set of Aussie triathletes did it twice in 1997 and once in 1998. It bodes well for the host nation's chances at next year's Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

It is also the first time since 2003 that Australian athletes have won both the men's and women's races at a World Cup event and the first time in six years one nation has clean swept the podium twice in the same season.

"It's been a good day all round, said Harrop (2hr:08min.26sec) who had said before the 1.5km swim, 40km cycle and 10km run she would not win.

Yet she finished ahead of diminutive Snowsill (2:10.11) and lanky Luxford 2:11.29) for her 12th World Cup crown.

She now shares world No. 1 World Cup ranking with Snowsill, who beat her into 2nd in the Hawaii World Cup earlier this month.