

INSIDE: THE VIRIDIAN RESORT NOOSA TRIATHLON MULTI SPORT FESTIVAL

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# AUSTRALIAN *Triathlete*



**EMMA SNOWSILL**  
WINS FROM NOOSA  
TO QUEENSTOWN - OUR  
NEW WORLD CHAMP

**ROBBO WINS**  
WORLDS AGAIN!

**THE EDGE - TRAINING TIPS**  
PREPARING FOR IRONMAN OZ  
IMPROVE YOUR CLIMBING  
POWER WITH PILATES  
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# 2003 ITU World Triathlon Championship, Queenstown, NZ

RACE REPORTS COURTESY OF TRIATHLON AUSTRALIA'S MEDIA TEAM | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DELLY CARR

Advance Australia Fair was never sang so sweetly (or so it sounded at the time), as Emma Snowsill and Peter Robertson had just won the World Champs and hundreds of Aussies gathered around the winner's dais to pay homage to our newly crowned stars. Cries of "We love you Emma" and "Robbo's a legend", ably led by the un-official team court jester, Stewart Talbot rang out through the crowd.

It was a proud moment for all the coaching and Triathlon Australia staff, team management (led superbly by Dave Budge and Kerry Stubbs and supported by Keelin McGrory of New Balance, Donna Croft from USM and the team from Tri Travel), and most of all the age-group athletes who had competed the day before. The atmosphere at the end was electric and the age-group athletes not only celebrated our new world champs but their own efforts from the day before.

The previous day around 350 Australian age-group athletes battled the logistical problems of the two-transition race, cold water, a nasty little hill out of the lake and a challenging course to finish what was described as the most breathtaking triathlon course in the world. Yep, all those problems during race week disappeared as the athletes and spectators revelled in the success of all our athletes. There were inspirational stories, great friendships forged and plenty of fun had by all!

This was the 2003 ITU World Champs and below is the race stories from each of the categories.

## Elite Female:

### Emma's Golden Run in Queenstown

Australia has a new golden girl in 22-year-old Gold Coaster Emma Snowsill who became the seventh Australian woman to win an ITU World Triathlon Championship in Queenstown.

Snowsill, on her first world elite team in New Zealand, left the world's best in her wake as she powered away on the final 10 kilometre run through the Millbrook Estate golf course. She sprinted across the finish line draped in the Australian flag and soaked up the moment before hugging her mum and dad just moments later.

The pocket-rocket ran away from the field to win the gold medal by almost two minutes from the USA's Laura Reback who won silver with Australia's Olympic silver medallist Michellie Jones a close third, holding off world ranked number one Barb Lindquist.

Snowsill, who easily had the fastest run leg in the field of 43, admitted after the race she had no inclination at all to be a runner until cross country

running became compulsory in Year Ten at St Hilda's School on the Gold Coast

A stunned Snowsill said after her amazing victory "I was a swimmer not a runner and had no thoughts at all of a running career so I suppose I owe the sports mistress a vote of thanks for making the cross country compulsory."

On becoming Australia's latest world champion, the tiny tanned girl with the infectious smile said: "I can't believe I've done this....I'm really, really, really shocked. I came here not expecting anything, it's something that you dream about but I didn't expect it this quickly.

"When it came to the run I just decided to put my foot down and go for it."

Snowsill joins a special club of Australian women who have dominated the World Triathlon Championships since Michellie Jones won her back-to-back world crowns in 1992 and 1993.

Since then Emma Carney (1994 and 1997), Jackie Gallagher (1996), Joanne King (1998), Loretta Harrop (1999) and Nicole Hackett (2000) have also stood on top of the gold medal podium.

Jones said she was very happy with her performance, after a disruptive year with injury and reluctantly admitted she carried an injury into the race but was full of praise for Snowsill.

"Emma was just great, she took control and her performance was just fantastic," said Jones, who lost control of her bike in a sudden wind shift during the bike-run transition.

"I just kept telling myself to hang tough because believe me I was in a world of hurt."

#### Elite Male:

#### Braveheart Robbo Creates History in Queenstown

Sydney Olympian Peter Robertson created history when he became the first Australian to win a second ITU World Triathlon Championship with one of the bravest victories in the 15 year history of the sport.

The 27-year-old took his world championship medal tally to four (two gold and two silver from four starts) - since first finishing second to Switzerland's Olivier Marceau in Perth in 2000.

He will now go down in history as one of triathlon's greats and has his sights set on a second Olympic team.

"Robbo" won his first world crown in 2001 in Edmonton before finishing second to Spain's Ivan Rana in Cancun, Mexico last year.

It was the battle of the world champions as Robertson, Marceau and eventually Rana took on the challenging Queenstown course - described later by Robertson as the best course in the world.

"Fortune favours the brave" and it was the ever-popular Robertson who reaped the greatest reward after he and Marceau made the winning break in the early stages of the 30km bike leg.

Robbo signalled his intentions when he charged off the bike into the run transition with the speed of a gazelle and kept on running right to the finish, despite the valiant efforts of Rana.

In the end he powered home on the final 10km run to win in a time of 1hr 54mins 13 secs from Rana (1:54.37) and Marceau (1:54.52).

An ecstatic Robertson, draped in the Aussie flag and dripping in champagne said: "Today was my day..far out...this was the best race I have ever had and with Marceau we dominated on the bike, making a move when the rest of the pack didn't expect it.

"I was so pleased to see Marceau get on the podium because he deserved it - full credit to Olivier for the work he did."

But national pride ran through Robbo's veins.

"As soon as I pulled on the green and gold today I knew I was ready to do my absolute best - I just love competing for my country," said Robertson.

"And I also believe in fate and when I drew number 17 I knew it was going to be my day - I won in number 17 two years ago in Edmonton."

Robertson admitted he had to make some changes in his career and this year he made them - moving to Perth and ditching his "running sticks" - the sticks he had gripped in his hands for the last six years to assist with his running style.

He is training with Olympic swimming gold medallist Todd Pearson under coach Grant Stoelwinder and says the move has been a positive one.

Robertson danced and gigged his way through the finish shoot and lapped up the victory shouting "the champ is back" as the television cameramen and photographers captured his historic victory. >>



**Top:** Emma Snowsill leads Aussie Michellie Jones onto the run. **Bottom:** Olivier Bernhard breaks away on the bike with Australia's Peter Robertson.

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# New World Champion **Emma Snowsill**

BY NOEL MCMAHON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DELLY CARR



## At the end of 2002, after a year of “middle of the pack” performances Emma Snowsill sat down and thought what she was capable of in 2003.

**A**fter a couple of tough, emotionally draining personal years, Emma, then 21, was looking to take another step up the world triathlon ladder and consolidate herself as one of the top Australian women. But fate had other plans for her.

“My coach thought that if I went top ten in any World Cup race, he would be stoked. If I was top six Australian women, he would have been really stoked.”

That was a very realistic assessment by a hard nosed coach, but 12 months later Emma had exceeded all expectations, picking up ITU World Cup podiums in Tongyeong, Tiszaujvaros and Nice, a breakthrough win in ITU Makuhari and finally in Noosa in November.

Emma had achieved much more than she could ever have expected and after winning Noosa, she sat down with Australian Triathlete Magazine to reflect on her whirlwind year.

“I have achieved my goals quicker than or I thought I could and didn’t expect to be in the position I am. Noosa is my biggest win in Australia, definitely. Makuhari was nice but it was more exciting to win at home in Australia in a place where I did my first triathlon.

“The first time I ever saw Noosa was in 1996 and now seven years later I have won it, so it definitely is a special place for me. I have always loved the crowd and watching the pro race, I always thought that winning it would be so cool. It is definitely nice to fulfill a dream.”

If the first 11 months of 2003 were a shock to the system, December had a bigger surprise in store. After withdrawing from ITU Geelong, Emma headed to the ITU World Championships in Queenstown with “no expectations” and came home as the World Champion.

“It was my first time on a senior team competing for Australia and I was there to gain experience. I didn’t have any expectations, just to go in and do my best. I went into the World Championships by taking the words ‘World Championship’ out of the equation. It was just a race, a triathlon, and that is what I train for and that is what I do. I put it into the simple terms that it is. I didn’t think about the title because that could really make you nervous.

“I just wanted to get the swim over and done with, because it was pretty freezing. By the time I got out Sheila (Taormina) and Barb (Lindquist) had about forty seconds on us. There was quite a long straight and I could see them up the road when I got on the bike and I decided that they were too close to not try and bridge the gap. So I put my head down and went for it because I didn’t want them to have any advantage going into the run.

“There were eight of us in a pack and we all got off the bike together and I was fourth out of transition. So as soon as I got onto the road I went as hard as I could. At that stage I didn’t think I was going to win it and I didn’t even think I had them covered. Michellie was in the pack and all I thought was that I was in for a tough run. With Michellie there I didn’t want to leave it to the last minute, so I tried to make my move early.

“Out on the course people were telling me that I had a gap but I didn’t want to rely on it. It was about 100 metres from the finish line when my sister handed me an Australian flag and I turned around to see if someone was closing in. There wasn’t anyone, so I had time to relax in the final straight.

“The feeling crossing the line was shock. Just a lot of shock. I couldn’t believe that I was there by myself and I was crossing the line first. It was wild. It was great to win on the same day as Robbo and to bring home two world championships. You couldn’t ask for anything better,” she recalled.

Emma’s uncle and his family live in Queenstown and her mum, dad and sister were all there to witness history in the making. Emma’s runaway women’s world championship win flashed around the world and the quiet girl from Benowa Waters was now a household name.

Next morning (and even weeks later), Emma can’t believe it.

“I thought, ‘That’s not me - they are talking about somebody else’. My mum and dad started laughing at me and teasing me about being a world champion. So nothing has changed at home and I don’t want it to either.”

Being born on the Queensland’s Gold Coast, Emma and her younger sister Amy were never far away from the water, having a crack at nippers and becoming involved with local swimming squads in nearby Bundall.

“I have seen pictures of me at primary school. The first time I did competitive swimming would probably have been at the school carnivals. The pictures are of me on the dias, but when I look back at it now I must have only been about eight,” she recalled.

In the early days swimming took up most of the Emma’s sporting life but that was before she switched schools, moving to St Hilda’s in Southport.

“I started athletics when I went to St Hilda’s in 1996, in grade ten. I changed for the sporting program, particularly the swimming program but cross-country was compulsory and I was totally against it. My plan was to hide behind a tree but I decided I had better do this running thing. I was just going to finish, but I ended up winning it. That was a big shock to me and from then on I had to compete at all these different school athletic >>

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carnivals. I said 'no, no, no I only came here to swim', so that is how I started running."

Originally "conscripted" into running for the school over 3000m, once Emma stopped getting the swimmer's sore shins, she eventually got into it and really enjoyed it.

"I still preferred swimming but it was a nice change to do running. I probably enjoyed the cross country more than the track, it was longer distances of 6km and upwards and I preferred the endurance side of it."

Triathlon was also a foreign world for Emma until 1996, when a girl at her swim club who trained with Jenny Alcorn told her about the team's event at Noosa.

"She knew some people who ran and biked and they were looking for a swimmer and asked me if I wanted to do it. I said 'whatever' because I knew I could swim 1500m and I had done a couple of ocean swims before that and didn't mind them. She took me up to Noosa and the family came up to see what it was all about and I got hooked. I thought it

was so much better than swimming in indoor pools and doing a 50 metre event."

Emma didn't do a full race at Noosa until 2000 and her first full triathlon was in 1998 at the Qld state schools championships.

"I came third but I can't remember who won it. I think it was on a little course at Currumbin. I made Nationals All Schools and they would have been sprint distance races. In '99 I did my first Olympic distance race and I think it was the Australian Champs at Mooloolaba."

Finishing year 12, Emma enrolled in a Bachelor of Health Science at Griffith University on the Gold Coast, attempting to combine uni, work and a bit of training. In March 2000 as an age grouper, she started training with Bill Daveron, specifically for triathlon. Emma had some strong results, winning the 16-19 age group at the Australian Championship and went to ITU Worlds in Perth for the Worlds and won her age group title. Amazingly those races were some of only five Olympic distance races Emma had done to that time.

In 2001, Emma raced her first World Cup in Toronto (finishing 19th) two weeks before the Edmonton Worlds in 2001, which she raced as a junior elite.

But the bug had bitten. In April, 2002, Emma quit work, deferred uni and took up triathlon full time for her first real taste of living, training and racing overseas.

The highlights of 2002 were a third at the Ibiza World Long Distance Championships in Spain, 12th in World Cup Nice and 13th in Geelong. While solid performances for an up and coming junior, they were nothing to set the world on fire.

A fifth at the Australian Champs in Mooloolaba last April was a hint of things to come and in the second half of 2003, Emma's career has just taken off.

"You can train all you like, but you still have to get on the start line and produce what you can do in training. The work I have put in now is starting to pay off, but more than anything I am learning how to race. I am so unfamiliar with it all, I am just getting to know the races. It is great having experienced people around who know the courses inside out and understands competition. They are able to share their knowledge and shed some light.

**Below: Emma Snowsill on her way to victory in Noosa.**



***"You can train all you like, but you still have to get on the start line and produce what you can do in training. The work I have put in now is starting to pay off, but more than anything I am learning how to race."***

***Emma Snowsill***

Emma has always tried to keep her goals quite simple, but as World Champ she now acknowledges the Athens Olympics are a reality.

"I will keep going into races and try to perform at my best. My training is going well and I will just give it my best shot. Some days are good, some days aren't so good but I go out, enjoy it and have fun. If it works, it works.

"Obviously I have started thinking about Athens now and it has been a hot topic since Queenstown. I was thinking that by 2008 I would have become a more seasoned athlete and I would have got to a level where I thought I could make the Olympic team. But I have surprised myself and 2004 is just around the corner and maybe it is my time now," she said.

Emma's profile on the ITU website lists her proudest moment as winning a Gold medal at the 2001 "Sydney Youth Olympic Festival" Triathlon. After the Worlds in Queenstown, that should probably be amended. 🏆