

## Triathlon: Docherty cruises to world champs silver

By Eugene Bingham

5:00AM Tuesday June 10, 2008



Bevan Docherty earned himself a world championship silver medal, a pre-Olympic shot in the arm, and a rare fast-food treat all at once yesterday.

"With the sacrifices we make, we've got to treat ourselves once in a while," he said as he savoured his hard-won reward - a burger and chips.

The 31-year-old claimed New Zealand's second elite podium finish of the day at the triathlon world championships in a chilly Vancouver, Canada, following Samantha Warriner's third placing in the women's race.

Her finish was one of the most dramatic of the day, her gutsy sprint for the line squeezing out Australian Erin Densham.

By comparison, Docherty's finish was a doddle as he was able to cruise across the line with so comfortable a gap he had enough time to look over his shoulder at the dash for third going on behind him.

Spain's Javier Gomez won in 1h 49min 48sec, with Docherty 24 seconds back. Reto Hug, of Switzerland, was third, just ahead of South Africa's Hendrik de Villiers. New Zealand-born Matt Reed, who now represents the US, was fifth. The result was Docherty's best world championship result since his 2004 triumph, and showed he was on track for Beijing where he will be looking to equal or better his 2004 Olympic silver medal.

"It was good to get a nice, easy second, but I would have liked to have been a bit closer to Javier," he said.

"I've been pretty happy with my training and I knew I could hang with him. I knew that if I stayed with him as long as I could that would set me up.

"On the bike I tried to cover any potential breaks I thought would get away and keep myself up the front and out of trouble. I knew it was going to come down to the run."

Docherty said the result gave him a confidence boost leading up to the August Games, although he acknowledged the conditions would be much hotter than they were yesterday. "Some of the guys who struggled today are going to be on form for Beijing."

Warriner also took her result as a good harbinger to the Olympics. "I can't believe my run, especially the finish. This is such a big boost to me to claim a medal in these circumstances ... I'm stoked."

Her previous best performance at the world championships was 11th.

She was left to fight for third after American Sarah Haskins and Helen Tucker rode away from the field, with Tucker making it to the line first in 2h 1min 37sec, four seconds ahead of Haskins. Warriner was 55sec behind the leader. Other New Zealanders to finish included Debbie Tanner in ninth and Andrea Hewitt in 25th.

In the under-23 men's event, Martin Van Barneveld was third.

A clutch of New Zealanders also enjoyed top results elsewhere yesterday - Graham O'Grady was runner-up at the Escape from Alcatraz event in San Francisco, while Terenzo Bozzone was second and Fiona Docherty (sister of Bevan) fourth in the Eagleman triathlon in Maryland.