

right Jen Segger at the 2011 Ultraman Canada

Segger Wins Ultraman Canada

Squamish's own Jen Segger took the women's title and finished third overall at the 11th Ultraman Canada. The accomplished ultra distance runner and adventure racer used her run prowess to post the top 84.3 km split of 8:36:05 to come from behind on day three to win in 26:59:29 – quite an accomplishment for the 31-year-old who completed her first triathlon at the Oliver Half Iron this year. American Joni More, who led Segger by over 20 minutes at the start of run, placed second in 27:14:01 and Erin Beresini (USA) picked up third (28:49:15). Montreal's Kat Calder-Becker finished fourth in 29:42:49.

The U.S.'s John Bergen led after day one and just kept building on his lead with top splits in the biking and run segments. His final 7:29:03 run allowed him to cross the line in 23:48:29 to take the overall win and men's title. Brazil's Roberto Parseghian finished second (26:38:44) and 50-year-old Ed Marbach of Penticton made an impressive third-place (27:14:57) Ultraman debut. Scott McDermott of Sylvan Lake cracked the top five with a 27:23:32 fourth-place finish. The Ultraman Canada Distance consists of a 10 km swim and 145.3 km bike on day one, 275.8 km on day two, and an 84.3 km run on the third and final day.

Great Performances by McQuaid and Symonds at Lake Stevens

Australia's Luke Bell (3:56:50) and American Tyler Stewart (4:27:31) won the overall titles at Ironman 70.3 Lake Stevens. Penticton's Jeff Symonds ran a race-best 1:14:09 to maintain his third-place position off the bike (3:58:29). Victoria's Stephen Kilshaw finished fifth (4:02:29). Stewart essentially won the race after the bike ride. No one came close to her 2:31:05 ride, but she also added the top run of 1:22:29 for the clear victory over Victoria's Melanie McQuaid (4:37:58). Vancouver's Christine Fletcher finished sixth (4:44:10). Jason Sandquist (M40-44, 4:23:35) and Carol Peters (W60-64, 5:32:04) were tops in their age categories. David Matheson (M40-44, 4:28:35), Lisa Rogers (W40-44, 5:03:37) and Andela Cullen Spooner (W55-59, 5:40:24) finished second, while Jenny Ayers (W45-49, 5:17:20) and Cullen Goodyear (W60-64, 6:07:45) placed third.



Interview with Jen Segger the 2011 Ultraman Canada Champion

TMC: Describe your race win.

JS: The biggest journey for me to actually accomplishing this goal was learning how to swim. I only just learned a few months ago and, because I am not keen on swimming in a pool, I only had a few short months in the lake to learn. I knew that for me the race would start once I was out of the water. The entire experience was just fabulous – the race has a real family atmosphere. There were some great ladies to compete against. Because I have been racing so much this year (not triathlon, this is my second-ever triathlon), I knew that I just had to keep my head in the game mentally one more time.

TMC: Was it your strategy to stay close during the first two days and take it to the rest of the field on the run?

JS: My strategy was like this: survive the swim, even if I am dead last, I just had to get through it. I knew the race would start once I hit the bike and I would just chip away at the time deficit that I had with the other women. I am very comfortable with all the bike distances, so I hoped to just keep moving up day after day and, yes, I was told over and over that the race would be won in the run. Luckily for me, this is my overall strength, so I approached that day with full focus. I went hard off the line and made up the 23-minute time deficit on Joni by the half-marathon mark. Then it was just keep your head down and keep pushing through the pain. Again, I am very comfortable with the distance (100 milers are my thing), but I knew the road would hurt me because I am a mountain runner.

TMC: This was your first Ultraman Triathlon. Why do it? What was most difficult?

JS: This was my second triathlon. I did the Oliver half Ironman in June just to get a good swim in. It didn't go very well as I had a full panic attack in the water. I'm

no stranger to Ultra distance events, but this race was a bucket list item, something that I had to experience just once. I loved the goal of learning a new sport (swim) in order to prepare. Most difficult was the last 2 km of the swim. I had only swum up to a distance of 3.5 km in preparation for this! My best-case scenario plan was a 3:30 swim, so I am happy with that. Endurance training principles don't change (I'm an endurance coach) so I felt quite confident that I could transfer my off-road trail running and mountain biking directly into this. I think I was the only person who didn't ride a tri bike – I had it as my spare bike, but because I don't ride aero very much, I didn't think I could hold it for the duration of the 270 km ride. Instead, I went with my awesome road bike and had a good time.

TMC: Apart from the obvious physical conditioning, what else is needed to do this race?

JS: This race really is a team race and I had three amazing crew members who made it possible for me. Our systems worked like clockwork and, therefore, I had no stress or worries or had to exert extra energy on things. All I had to do was race. I can't thank them enough. We dialled my nutrition to an art – I have a lot of experience with what is needed to get through stage racing. Everyone kept asking about my magic drink that I had – well, it was a smoothie and the key in there was the Udo's Oil (which contains omega 3, 6, 9) that I took from start to finish of the race. I was drinking my smoothies right up until I went to bed each night.

TMC: Are you going to compete at the Ultraman World Championships?

JS: No. It looks like a great race, but I have been racing so hard for so many months now that I am just ready to take a breather and rest a bit. It's time for me to get on my stand-up paddleboard and just go have some unfocused adventures. There are lots of mountains that are calling my name.