

GRIFFO'S BIG DAY OUT

Leon Griffin scores an early-season win at Campbell's Shepparton Half Ironman

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Leon Griffin won the Campbell's Shepparton Half Ironman Triathlon in emphatic style, leading throughout the 1.9km swim, 90.1km bike and 21.1km course to prove that he will be a force to be reckoned with when he steps up to the Ironman distance at Western Australia in a few weeks' time

"I feel so good that I might jog another lap [of the 7km run course]", said a relaxed and happy Griffin. "The [race] was an important hit out for my impending Ironman debut in Busso and thankfully I didn't encounter any bad luck this time and was able to get the performance I have been looking for with the form I knew I currently possessed."

"Crossing the finish line in first place with a 3-4 minute buffer and time of 3:53 and with an encouraging 1:14 half marathon, it was great to feel like I could have kept going a lot longer. This provides me with great confidence for Ironman Western Australia in Busselton."

Serious injuries threatened to end Griffin's career in late 2007 but his fortunes were reversed at the Ironman 70.3 Geelong early this year and he hasn't looked back. The support from family and friends and staying injury-free have returned the former world duathlon champion to his scintillating best.

Griffin also congratulated event organisers, the Shepparton Triathlon Club, for staging a well-organised event.

"The volunteers out on the course were sensational. I will definitely aim to be back here in

2009. It's really given me that final bit of confidence for Busselton, that I know everything's on track".

South Australia's Matty White finished second almost five minutes behind Griffin, just managing to hold off NSW's Peter Loveridge, who had his usual scorching run leg to take the final place on the podium.

Ironman champion Jason Shortis finished fourth in just under four hours in what was another good hit out for Ironman Western Australia and his attempt to regain the title he won there in 2006.

The women's race was also a one-sided affair, with ACT's Kat Baker easily winning from Elly Franks and Abigail Bayley.

"Awesome! I was using this race as a final hard session before my first Ironman in three weeks, so I am stoked to have won", said the 21-year-old Baker.

More than 650 triathletes from around Australia competed in the half Ironman, while another 200 triathletes took on the challenge of the "Hexman," a shorter triathlon (633m swim, 30km ride and 7km run) held the same day.

Race director Peter Guy said, once again, Shepparton was acknowledged as one of the most friendly and welcoming races on the race calendar.

"We've really focused on building this into an event which the whole community can engage with," he said. "Between the two events, we had our record number of entrants, and Shepparton was excited to attract a strong pro contingent with Leon Griffin, Jason Shortis and the other boys all choosing to visit our event for the first time."

"We were also thrilled to have such ideal conditions, with perfect clear blue skies and a nice breeze which gave everyone a good tailwind coming home on the bike." 🏆

RESULTS

CAMPBELL'S SHEPPARTON HALF IRONMAN

16 NOVEMBER 2008; SHEPPARTON, VIC

1.9KM/90KM/21.1KM