

TARANAKI MASTERS' GAMES

On the 17th March, I took myself down to Stratford to pit myself against other old wrinklies in the Masters Games.

After a long drive down, I joined friends from the Hamilton Masters' Cycle Club who'd taken three days to bike down. Thursday was their rest day, so they came out to support me in the 10K road walk. I figured this might be my only chance of a medal, so I chased down anyone who looked like they could be in my age group. Couldn't catch Neal who did an awesome 68 minutes*, (5 minutes ahead of me), but we both got a gold medal. Yeah!

On Friday morning, we biked the 20K time trial, followed by a steep hill climb. The Toko Pub put on a good feed of chips and sausages before the prizegiving. With rewards in each five year age group, I got two more golds.

That evening, I revived my tired legs by wallowing in the Stratford pools while the serious swimmers did their warm-up laps. Luckily, I didn't belly flop in the 25 metre freestyle and threshed down the pool as though Jaws himself was after me! I enjoyed watching and chatting, even enjoyed my short backstroke, then breaststroke races. But what I enjoyed most, (having missed dinner) was the supper. Delicious chocolate éclairs!

The prizegiving was very slick with sealed envelopes containing our medals and times.

On Saturday. I wobbled and worried, perched on top of a high stand, while a strange man gripped under my seat! (Bike seat that is.) The gun went off, I shot down the wooden ramp, stood up on the pedals and sped down the road for the 300 metre sprint. The fastest guy did 25 seconds while I took 35. Later, I had a second go and I managed 27 seconds. Great fun !

After a feed and prize-giving at the T.E.T Multi-sport centre, we raced back to our accommodation to shower and head out for a meal. No time to watch any of the other 21 sports, but we met some neat people.

These games are friendly and affordable. My eight events cost just \$37.

Sunday was the 30k bike race out of town. I was up against the local lady in my age group who was reported to be fast. Great! I fancied a silver medal for a change, but after chatting away on the second lap she dropped behind on the hills!

The final feed at the T.E.T centre topped all previous feeds. Hot spuds, lasagne and fresh fruit. One of our guys recited a poem taking the mickey out of the Stratford cyclists by saying the Hamilton guys had biked down just to give them a chance, yet still beat them. Next year, I plan to bike down with them, just for fun. Any starters?

Carolyn Carter

****My actual time was 67:56 minutes which equalled my PB. I also achieved my goal of beating my age:- under 68 minutes as a 68-year-old. - Neal.***