

COOLANGATTA GOLD 2021 by Ian Simms

After several months of intense training by a dedicated group of MSLS Clubbies the weekend had finally arrived for the short-course Coolangatta Gold.

In the final week leading up to the race, there was a lot of friendly banter and this set the scene for a big race day.

Arriving Friday night, Andrew Brown and myself decided to go for a paddle on the skis to get used to the extremely rough conditions which we were afraid would lead into race day (great runners) and fortunately the surf settled by the next day.

Race day arrived and at 5.45am I arrived at the beach where there was already a hype of activity with the everyone preparing their skis, boards and equipment. Everyone was in great spirits and excited as the conditions were quite calm which took a lot of pressure off everyone.

Most of the Mooloolaba competitors were in the second wave off the beach which included Team I Patrol; Team Lady JAGA; Matty Stewart and myself with Team Mools Blondies to follow in the third wave.

The starting gun fired for the second wave and Matty setting off at a cracking pace and Andrew from Lady JAGA and Helen Chorley from I Patrol, in close pursuit and after 10.5km of racing the two teams, finished within seconds of each other. This then led into the 2km swim with Barry Greenbury (Lady JAGA) and Andre Nunn (I Patrol) who were also in close contact for the 2km swim that had a strong sweep and they too finished within seconds of each other. This then set up the scene for a close board race between Janine Wilson (Lady JAGA) and Brett Williams (I Patrol). At this stage all teams were still trying to chase down Matty who had powered away in front. Leading the 5.5km run, the fresh legs of Al Morton (I Patrol) and Andrew Dettrick (Lady JAGA) ran Matty down with I Patrol taking 1st Place in the 190+ mixed teams and Lady JAGA coming in 2nd in the same category. Matty was brilliant and came in 3rd in his age group.

The Mools Blondies who finished 2nd in the Open Female category consisted of Kelsey Reed who had an excellent ski paddle in a time of 1hr; followed by Shelby Rochford who completed the 2km swim in 56.57; Lani Morton who paddled the board for 3km in a time of 39.22; and Kelsey then fronted up again for the 5.5km run with a 37.29. These young ladies did an amazing job as first-time competitors in the Open Female section with Lani not even paddling that distance until a couple of days before the race. This is a shining example of what you can achieve with enthusiasm and some hard work.

All Mooloolaba people either finished on the podium or did a PB! A shout out and big thanks to the tireless handlers, who without their support and assistance, we could not have got through the day!

The excitement after the race amongst the competitors was contagious and we hope that next year even more members will join the fun with more teams and individual competitors.

