

Asics Noosa 5k Bolt

Qld, 5th November

Written by Matt Phillips, Images by Barry Alsop - Eyes Wide Open Images

The Asics Noosa 5k Bolt continues to cement its reputation as the premier 5km road race in Australia after a galaxy of stars descended upon Noosa for the fifteenth running of the race. National Cross Country champion, Martin Dent and Australian 1500m champion Sarah Jamieson claimed the spoils after an exciting afternoon at the idyllic Queensland holiday destination. The Noosa Multi Sport Festival highlighted by Sunday's 23rd annual Elysium Noosa Triathlon was a weeklong extravaganza of events. The expanded Super Saturday card featured the Noosa Mini Bolt for kids followed by an inline skate race, an AFL Footy Legends Triathlon and the Noosa Criterium. Topping the card was the Bolt, run for the first time under lights at 6:30pm.

The Bolt continues to feature small but quality fields, evidenced by the results and depth of the place getters in recent years with World Championship 5000m Bronze Medallist, Craig Mottram and Olympic 5000m Silver Medallist, Sonia O'Sullivan

being standout winners.

As the Noosa Criterium contestants began to exit the course, excitement began to mount as the runners made their way onto Noosa Parade for their warm up and run throughs. The course is set up for a 200m run to the finish line, followed by four 1.2km laps. A packed grandstand and corporate marquees loomed large on one side of the Parade, whilst on the other side, spectators were three, four and five deep behind the barricades near the start/finish area with bright spotlights casting their glare over the area and contrasting with the dimmer street lights. The crescendo reached a fever pitch when MCs Pat Carroll and Krishna Stanton introduced the elites to the crowd as they did a final run through past the grandstand to the start.

Shortly afterwards, the men's field of 38 athletes were sent on its way followed two minutes later by the 19 strong women's field. Naturally, the pace was fast and furious from the go and after disappearing out of sight down the Parade, spectators

didn't have to wait long before a huge lead pack of fifteen men stacked with big names rumbled past, clocking 3.23 for the first 1.2km lap. Dent, Steve Moneghetti, Youcef Abdi, Lee Troop, Peter Nowill, Alastair Stevenson and Mark Tucker - what a pack! And a host of challengers looking to make a name for themselves. The racing was tight and after the third bend, Stevenson had a minor stumble after appearing to come into contact with Westcott.

The second lap saw a split of 3.28 with all the big guns still in the firing line and the pack trimmed to twelve men. Westcott, Dent and Abdi were three wide at the front with the pack five deep to the back. Another 3.28 lap followed and by now the pack had started to fragment and was down to six. Dent lead through Westcott and Stevenson, with Nowill also putting his hand up for the challenge. Moneghetti and Troop had been dropped and were ten metres adrift. The pressure was really being applied and MC Carroll was starting to lose his voice!

The deciding lap saw Dent crank the pace

The spectators get a close look as the runners charge past.



up another notch to test the intestinal fortitude of his rivals with only Athens Olympian, Nowill able to stay in touch. Cresting the slight incline of the canal bridge and hurtling towards the bright spotlights and roaring crowd of the finish line, the agony was etched onto the faces of both men as they desperately tapped into their remaining reserves of speed and stamina. Ultimately, Dent prevailed by just a few metres with his scintillating 3.17 final lap good enough to keep Nowill one second in arrears. Not far behind, another finishing duel was fought out with Westcott edging the improving Collis Birmingham for third, also by one second, with a further two seconds to 2004 winner, Mark Tucker in fifth. Stevenson dropped off the pace in the final lap but had enough fighting spirit in the home stretch to hold off a late challenge from Moneghetti and Troop.

Dent collected a \$2000 winner's purse to add to his 2005 kitty that includes wins at the National Cross Country Championship, Adelaide's City to Bay, the Burnie Ten and a third in the City to Surf. Given his rich vein of form, it is not surprising that Dent is tossing up a number of options for the Commonwealth Games. Describing the race, Dent said "I was surprised to win after an ordinary track race on Thursday night and I think this is definitely the best field that I have come up against in the road racing season and it was great to finish the road season off with another win. During the race we tried to keep it fast to get rid of the 1500m runners and it worked."

Second place getter Nowill is definitely a Noosa specialist taking home a cheque for the third straight year after third placings in 2004 and 2003. Nowill was delighted with his run especially considering he had

tried to run a 3.45 1500m at the Simon Doyle Classic 48 hours previously, but instead, trailed the field home in 3.54. 'Tonight was different and in the last k I felt like I was going to make an impact on the race' he said.

Joining Jamieson and O'Sullivan in the women's race were the three times Olympian, Kerryn McCann, 2004 Bolt winner Eloise Wellings and former National 1500m champion, Suzy Walsham. The opening lap saw McCann, Jamieson and O'Sullivan pass through almost three abreast, with Wellings just a few metres adrift. The quartet were running comfortably in the knowledge that they had a class edge over most of the field and it was a waiting game to see who was going to make the first move.

The completion of the second lap saw the leading trio again go through three abreast but after swooping out of the hairpin, O'Sullivan decided to tuck in behind her rivals and draft them. The challengers were now starting to fall out of contention, twenty metres behind with Walsham moving up and then dropping Wellings to stay within striking distance. The third lap of this test of wills was completed with the leaders still in a pack of three but O'Sullivan was starting to labour as she dropped a couple of metres off to set up a likely race in two. As the girls disappeared into the distance for the final lap, the question was posed: would the

speed of Jamieson or the stamina of McCann win out in the battle for the \$2000 winner's purse? The answer was soon revealed - speed - as a triumphant Jamieson scorched home five seconds clear of McCann with another 14 seconds to O'Sullivan.

Afterward Jamieson explained that she had come to Noosa a fortnight prior to get some serious training in. 'I've been training for two weeks in the sand hills of the National Park and I feel as strong as an ox.' Speaking of the race, Jamieson added 'I enjoyed every minute of it - I haven't done a 5k in a while.'

The initiative of event organiser, USM Events, to run the Bolt under lights at the conclusion of the Super Saturday card can only be described as a success. The Bolt is still a relatively young event and clearly has the potential to grow alongside the equally successful Noosa Triathlon, hopefully attracting increased prize money and television coverage along the way.

Dent leads the field with Youcef Abdi and Mark Tucker on his tail.



Results

Men

1. Martin Dent	14.04
2. Peter Nowill	14.05
3. Scott Westcott	14.09
4. Collis Birmingham	14.10
5. Mark Tucker	14.12
6. Alastair Stevenson	14.22
7. Steve Moneghetti	14.22
8. Lee Troop	14.23
9. Dylan Wykes	14.27
10. Christopher Reeves	14.48

Women

1. Sarah Jamieson	15.51
2. Kerryn McCann	15.56
3. Sonia O'Sullivan	16.10
4. Suzy Walsham	16.25
5. Emily Morris	16.34
6. Belinda Wilsher	16.43
7. Eloise Wellings	17.04
8. Jackie Fairweather	17.12
9. Helen Stanton	17.15
10. Jessica Gilfillan	17.26



The start of the women's event.



Mona interviewing Troop.

