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MUSSELLMAN TRIATHLON ITU RACE PRACTICE FOR BEIJING

(GENEVA, NEW YORK) For three Beijing-bound triathletes, the Musselman Triathlon ITU Pan-American Cup Race served as an excellent opportunity for a practice run before the big event next month.

The Musselman is the final ITU Series triathlon before the Games. Three Olympians: Americans Jarrod Shoemaker and Julie Ertel, and Canadian Kathy Tremblay, joined a field of fifty professionals competing in Geneva, New York on Saturday, July 12.

In the men's race, Shoemaker, 26, of Maynard, Mass, came in second, bested by Brian Fleischmann, 30, of Colorado Springs, CO. Fleischman finished the race in 1:51:35, Shoemaker coming in just twelve seconds behind.

A strong burst on the bike, and an alliance with another athlete, was the secret to winning, Fleischman said.

"I knew that Jarrod's been working on his swim, and I wanted to wait the swim out, to make it hard for him," said Fleischman. "I was able to do that. I got away right from the beginning of the bike, and just put in an attack with Cameron Dye, and we worked real well together. We had him forty-five seconds into the bike."

Shoemaker agreed that the beginning of the bike was the deciding factor in the race.

"I had an awesome swim, and then we just kind of let Brian and Cameron off the front for some reason," he said. "No one would really help me try to chase them down, so we ended up with a pack that lost about fifteen or twenty seconds a lap."

The ITU Pan-American Cup Series race is an Olympic-distance triathlon, allowing drafting – riding in the slipstream of other riders on the bike. In this type of racing, alliances often form, with athletes utilizing each other to minimize effort and, thus, maximize effectiveness.

Fleischman was enthusiastic about his win.

“A race like this does me justice,” he said. “I’m usually in the shadows of (top U.S. professionals) Hunter (Kemper) and Andy (Potts), so just for me to come here and show myself how good I can really be, it’s a good result for me. This is what will keep me going in the sport for the next few years.”

In the women’s race, the Olympians pulled a one-two punch: Ertel, 35, of Irvine, CA, coming in at 2:04:52, and Tremblay, 26, of Quebec, at 2:07:02.

The two left the water in a pack of five athletes, each exiting at times between 20:11 and 20:15; four of the five would remain as one on the bike, finishing within seven seconds of each other. On the run, however, Ertel quickly pulled ahead of the pack.

“We had a group of four, actually five, of us, on the swim. We got to the bike, and we had three experienced riders and one inexperienced rider, which is good preparation, because you never know who’s going to be in the group at Beijing,” Ertel said. “My focus today was just to get off the bike and run as hard as I could, to see how I would feel running hard in the Games,” she said. “It worked out pretty well.”

Her quickness on the run was especially surprising, since she noted that she’d discovered at the beginning of that portion of the race that she’d forgotten to remove a packet of sunscreen from her shoe. Forced with the prospect of slowing down to remove it – and risking a chance of losing – or continuing on – simply risking some oozing – Ertel chose the latter, completing the race before extracting the packet of Bullfrog at the finish.

Ertel noted that, though she’d planned to use the Musselman as practice for the heat and humidity she expects to face in Beijing, the course was surprisingly uncomfortable.

“It was hot and humid as planned,” she said. “But there was a nice breeze off the lake the whole time, and there was a fair amount of shade on the course.”

For Ertel, the chance to race in an ITU – International Triathlon Union – event here in the U.S. was a positive experience with a positive outcome.

“I like the whole series. I love the idea of the U.S. having a series, especially for draft-legal racing,” she said. “That’s definitely my preferred style of racing. I do the non-drafting just for good practice, but I love these races.”

Ertel was also excited about the crowd who came out in the support of the Musselman triathletes.

“I’m so happy to be on U.S. soil and have Americans cheer me on, cheer on their hometown or home-country athletes,” she said.

Complete results are available at <http://www.musselmantri.com>.

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The Musselman Triathlon is a four-triathlon weekend held in Geneva, NY July 12th and 13th. Now in its fifth year, the event consists of the ITU Olympic-distance triathlon, the Musselman half-Iron race, and a sprint and kids race. For more information on this release please contact C. D. Henderson at press@musselmantri.com.