



Radford nabs nail-biting win at Akaroa

State La Grande Swim, Akaroa, Feb 15th 2015

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New Zealand Open Water Swim Champion Kane Radford has taken out the State La Grande Swim in a thrilling finish at Akaroa today

The Perth based 24-year-old was stroke for stroke with Aucklander Phillip Ryan for the duration of the 2.8km race, but just had the edge when it counted at the finish line.

Radford was a body length in front as the two swimmers exited the water, and raced up the beach to finish in a time of 31 minutes and eight seconds, just two seconds ahead of Ryan. Troy Balvert hung on for third, after falling off the blistering pace during the latter stages of the race.

It was a satisfying win for Radford, who missed the opening three events to concentrate on qualifying for the World Champs, and only flew in from Perth on Friday morning.

“Yeah it’s tough flying from there. It’s like a flight from Europe with all the stops you have to make,” he said.

The conditions also made life difficult. An unseasonal cold snap saw the mercury plunge to around 14 degrees, a far cry from the temperatures Radford has been experiencing in Western Australia.

“It was hard swimming in a wetsuit too. It’s a bit tight when you’re not used to it so I need to get in a couple more swims before the next event (in the State Ocean Swim Series) in Mount Maunganui”, he said.

For Ryan it was a case of so close and yet so far.

“We’ve had a lot of close swims lately but he just seems to have the edge at the end”, he said.

“I’m getting closer though, so hopefully I can get him in one of the two remaining races in the series,” he added

In contrast, Stefannie Gillespie was a convincing winner in the women’s event.

Gillespie was vying with national 5km open water champion Penelope Hayes for the title with around 500 metres to go, but a burst of speed saw her claim a comfortable 21 second advantage at the line.

In the end, Hayes had to settle for third, with new series leader Abi Chapman racing into second place.

The State Ocean Swim Series now heads to Mount Maunganui next month, for race five of the six-race series.

ENDS

2014 State La Grande Swim:

Men:

1. Kane Radford (Perth)	31:08	
2. Phillip Ryan (Auckland)	31:11	+0:02
3. Troy Balvert (Cambridge)	31:49	+0:40
4. Liam Thomson (Sydney)	32:21	+1:13
5. Campbell Kershaw (Canterbury)	34:16	+3:08

Women:

1. Stefannie Gillespie (Dunedin)	35:05	
2. Abi Chapman (Auckland)	35:27	+0:21
3. Penelope Hayes (Cambridge)	35:33	+0:27
4. Sam Winward (Christchurch)	36.40	+1:34
5. Gendi Roberts (Christchurch)	36:46	+1:41

2014/2015 Series Standings (after four rounds):

Men:

1. Phillip Ryan	298.67
2. Troy Balvert	295.82
3. Yasunari Hirai	200.00
4. George O'Brien	199.14
5. Liam Albery	198.39

Women:

1. Abi Chapman	287.16
2. Gendi Roberts	285.06
3. Aimee Moss	284.80
4. Charlotte Webby	200.00
5. Laura Crockart	197.72

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