

LYONS AND ASHTON DOMINATE 9TH SUBIC BAY INT'L TRIATHLON

By Carlo Carrasco, TRAP PRO

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SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Malcolm Lyons (AUS) and Melissa Ashton (AUS) gave a glimpse of Australia's vaunted superiority as they posted a double in contrasting fashion yesterday in the rain-soaked International Triathlon Union's 9th Subic Bay International Triathlon (SUBIT) where 208 triathletes from nine countries saw action.

Lyons, expecting to land in the top 25 in the world in his only 4th year in the triathlon circle, had to ward off the strong challenge of Japan's Ryosuke Yamamoto en route to his ascent to the throne vacated by back-to-back winner Daniel Lee Chi Wo of Hong Kong.

Ashton, ranked No. 11 female in the world and No. 3 in Australia, triumphed with ease. Coming out of the water ahead of the opposition she erected a huge one minute and nine seconds edge she stretched methodically as she raced against the clock.

Lyons and Ashton, both law students at University of Technology-Sydney, clocked one hour 53 minutes and 29 seconds and 2:03:34, respectively, in this ITU Point race and Asia Cup event sponsored by SPEEDO, Enervon, Philippine Sports Commission, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Gerry's Grill, Nestle Power Bar, Hotel La Corona, Asia Pacific Insulation, Velocity Bikes and POC.

Ashton erased the female all comers record of 2:04:35 chalked up by compatriot and 2000 ITU World Champion Nicole Hackett in last year's SUBIT. Lyons was one minute 24 seconds off Takumi Obara's all comers' mark of 1:52:10 registered in the 1997 Asian Triathlon Championship also at Subic Bay.

Davao City's George Vilog, former junior champion and record holder, finally emerged as champion in the Enervon National Triathlon Championship after being tipped among the top favorites the past three stagings.

Quezon City's Ani Karina de Leon, last year's runner-up, led all the way in the grueling Standard Distance 51.5 Km (1.5 Km swim-40 Km bike-10 Km run) event and crowned herself the local triathlon queen.

Yamamoto (1:54:23) who yielded the pacesetter's role for good to Lyons only in the last two kilometers as the bruises he suffered from a bike fall took its toll and Hong Kong's Nicole Rayson (2:07:59) who banked on a strong run settled for the runner-up honors in the SUBIT. Rounding out the winner's circle were Japanese Kenta Andoh (2:01:46) and Eri Nakagawa (2:09:40).

In the nationals, Noel Salvador (2:05:29) of the Negros Occidental Triathlon Club and Australian-trained Kaye Lopez (2:30:53) of Quezon City the grabbed the silver medals with John Mark Yamoyam (2:06:02) also of Negros Occidental and defending champion Popo Nagtalon (3:31:59) of Quezon City copping the bronzes.

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Hong Kong's Andrew Wright (2:02:50), Yamoyam and India's Manesh Shinde (2:06:16) finished 1-2-3 in the introductory Under-23 as did Hong Kong's Lau Cheuk Chi (2:21:17) Lopez and Araullo.

On the 24-strong Junior Sprint (16-19) side event, Hong Kongites Lau Ching Yin (male) and Gorilla Chau Chiu Nam (female) took the top honors over their respective opponents. Lau won the Sprint Distance 25.75 Km competition (750 M swim-20 Km bike- 5 Km run) in 1:01:43 and Chau registered 1:14:14.

Top Filipino Junior Sprint finishers Francis Mercado and Astrud Valdez claimed the honors and are rewarded by receiving an invitation to a junior triathletes training camp in Japan set for July-August. The organizing Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) is supporting Mercado and Valdez to Japan.

OTHER CATEGORICAL WINNERS

Daniel Bangayan (23-29 M) Christian Yu (23-29 F)
Jojo Macalintal (30-34 M) Jasmin Mercado (30-34 F)
Mau Gonzales (35-39 M)
Rune Stroem (2:19:29
Alvin Alindogan (45-49 M)
Rudy Dizon (50-54 M)
Tirso de Luna (55-over M)