

## Multisport: Goldrush winner close to pulling out

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You cannot prepare for an event such as the three-day Goldrush multisport race; it has be part of your lifestyle, Scott Cole said after crossing the finishing line in Alexandra yesterday.

The 36-year-old Swedish environmental economist ran, cycled and kayaked 375km throughout Central Otago over the weekend and was the first individual competitor home in 17hr 57min.

He had come to New Zealand for the Coast to Coast but decided to stay for the Goldrush.

"I really wanted to do this one. I love staged races. You really get to push yourself each day."

He almost did not make it to the finish line though.

On Sunday morning, about 10min into a mountain bike leg, his chain came off, got stuck and then broke.

"I was so close to pulling out ... I was about to just turn around and go back to the start line," he said.

However, he managed to piece it back together.

"By then I had lost many places but I slowly worked my way back up and then won that stage ... I was so happy I didn't quit."

The one disappointing aspect of the race was that four-time Goldrush winner Dougal Allan, of Wanaka, was not competing, he said.

"It helped me win ... but I would like to come back and I would like to see Dougal Allan at the start line so I could see where I come against him."

No strangers to each other, the two men had raced against each other both overseas and at this year's Coast to Coast.

"But he was just leagues ahead [in the Coast to Coast]."

A former team-mate of Cole, German-born Simone Maier, now of Wanaka, claimed the women's individual section in 18hr 44min.

It was the second time the 33-year old lifeguard has competed in and won the Goldrush but this time she was more competitive, claiming last year was "just for fun".

"[This year] I was racing with a friend [Ailsa Rollinson] so had a race face on and I wanted to see what it was like to do it [competitively]."

Even though she was taking it more seriously this year, she said it was more of a training race. She is off to China in two weeks for a similar four-day event.

While she would be back for the Goldrush next year, she was considering doing it in a team because "it got boring on my own.

"Yesterday was pretty lonely. I was riding my bike all on my own."

The first team home was the Pulse Fitness team of Blake Luff (22), of Dunedin, Alex McGregor (22), of Alexandra and Jason Palmer (28), of Balclutha, in 15hr 56min, despite McGregor riding the the wrong way and covering an extra 16km. The three played down their win, saying the event was a good fun weekend away.

In contrast to last year, the weather was mostly fine for this year's event and the most competitors had to contend with was wind and a shower of rain at Bendigo Reach yesterday morning. Organiser Tim Pearson said he thought several course records in the teams section had been broken over the weekend and although numbers were down on previous years it was "really successful".

He said there were no serious injuries and only one person had pulled out.