



Sam Appleton Triathlete

As I write this I am currently sitting in the Paris Airport McDonalds using the free Wi-fi that's on offer. I have spent the last month travelling quite a bit, including France twice, Germany, and Italy. I spent most of my time in the small German town of Witten, about 45 minutes outside Dusseldorf. I was there with 4 other Australian guys training including Cameron Good and Aaron Royle. Unfortunately the weather in Germany at this time of year isn't desirable. Most days were not getting above 15 degrees! I'm supposed to be over in Europe missing winter, but I think it was colder there than it was in Australia. We managed to escape the cold of Germany for a while when myself, Cameron Good, and Joshua Mchugh ventured to the beautiful town of Sottomarina, about 50km from Venice, we did a little local race there in which we all managed to pocket a little bit of cash. We then took a day to explore Venice. It was incredible. No cars, bike or busses are allowed inside the town. The only way to get around is to walk or catch a boat taxi that takes you through the canals. It was a great experience and a definite highlight of my trip so far.

On the 5th and final round of the French GP series was held in the lovely seaside town of La Baule, on the west coast of France. La Baule boast the biggest sand beach of Europe with a distance of 12km. The race was held on the Saturday afternoon at 5:00pm which for me I am not used to doing. It was a beach start, which is my preferred method of starting as it gives the field time to break up before we enter the water and there is less carnage. I also think I am more suited to these beach starts because it the Australian bread and butter!

I had a good start to the swim but started to get swamped a little bit as we were going around the first buoy. I knew I was swimming well in the weeks leading into this race so I had a lot of confidence in my swimming ability. I wasn't exactly sure where I was in relation to the leaders as it was very choppy in the beach and when there is 90 plus people in the race it's hard to get your bearings. I came out of the swim and I was stoked to see the back of Javier Gomez just a meter in front of me.

Into transition I pulled off my wetsuit and knew I would have to sprint to get onto the back of the lead break that was forming out of the swim. I pushed really hard with 2 other guys and we got within 15metres but we just couldn't get there. I had to settle for the 2nd pack as I watch the lead group of about 10 guys ride away from us. I was disappointed I didn't make the front break but had to focus on the rest of the race.

The ride was 3 laps with lots of round-a-bouts to negotiate around. I was relatively comfortable in the pack and was trying to freshen up for the run. Onto the run and a group went out really quick, I couldn't keep the pace that these guys were setting. If there is one thing I have learned from this year's racing it's how fast the run is on these French GP's. I clocked a 15:50 run split and finished mid field.

I have to board my flight now, 40+ hours of travel await me. See you guys back in Aus!

Check out some pics below.

Au Revoir!





Myself and Javier Gomez exit the swim in La Baule



Cameron, Josh and Myself in Venice, Italy

