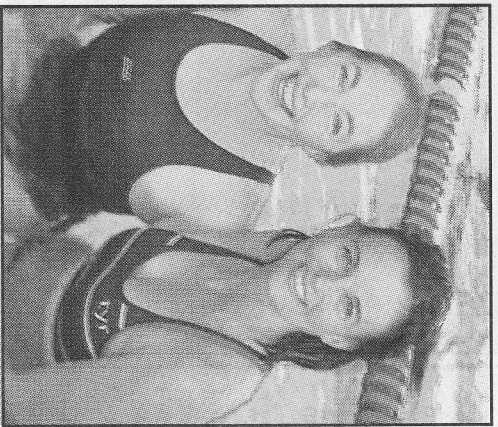


Triathlete tames wild aquathlon series opener



Michelle Gailey and Nikki Roddie

BATTLE hardened triathlete Michelle Gailey overcame wild weather and stubborn competition to win the opening round of the Northern Territory Aquathlon Series held on Saturday.

Torrential rains and howling winds battered competitors on arrival at Nightcliff pool with the event aptly nicknamed "The Monsoon Battle". The 300m swim got started before the arrival

of the strong winds and rain which lashed the coast and participants during the 3km run along the Nightcliff foreshore.

Gailey got through the first leg and transition in the quick time of four minutes 39secs with a comfortable margin on Briony Dixon (5.16), Hollie Goodall (5.21) and Lisa Quinell (5.25).

Gailey cruised through the demanding conditions during the run leg to win

the women's event in 17 mins 02 secs.

Strong running from Roddie saw her move through the field and claim second spot in 18 mins 28 secs. Dixon (18.43) held out Goodall (18.44) in an exciting sprint finish to gain third place.

In the men's field, pre-race favourite Kyle Gear finished his swim in a brisk four mins 3secs, with reigning NT Aquathlon

Champion Jerome Bosmans was next out in 4 mins 30 secs.

Bosmans was closely followed by a threatening group of five — Roland Edwards (4.31), Craig Garland (4.35), Ian Norton (4.36), Heath Porter (4.37) and Mick Outthred (4.38).

Once out of the water the run specialists made their mark.

Gear maintained his form and front position, winning the event in 14

mins 34 secs. Outthred was the big mover, overcoming an uncharacteristically tardy swim time to run through into second place in 14 mins 50 secs.

Bosmans (14.51) was able to hold out quick finishing Grant Preddy (15.05) to claim third place.

Race 2 of the Series, which incorporates the 2009 NT Aquathlon Championships (750m swim, 5km run), will take place at Lake Alexander in a fortnight.