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Berkel Takes Thriller As Keat Repeats At Challenge Copenhagen

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100,000 spectators turned out to witness an incredible finish to Challenge Copenhagen, as Tim Berkel out-ran local favourite Jimmy Johnsen for the win. In the women's race Rebekah Keat went sub-9 to repeat the title she won in 2010.

The final 8 kilometres on the run was shoulder to shoulder as defending champion Tim Berkel from Australia and home town favorite Jimmy Johnsen of Denmark battled it out for a close and very exciting finish of the 3,8 km swim, 180 km bike and 42,2 km run that had over 100,000 spectators in ecstasy in downtown Copenhagen today.

Fast swims was followed by fast bike times and after Jimmy Johnsen caught Tim Berkel coming into the final 8 km on the run, the two triathletes tried to do serious damage to each other's legs in that final kilometres each trying to get the gap that would secure the win. Finally in the last few km Tim Berkel found the extra speed and pulled away from Johnsen and got a good lead very late in the race and took home his second consecutive title at KMD Challenge Copenhagen. Finish time: 8:11:15 (swim 48:24, bike 4:33:18, run 2:46:16). Tim Berkel got a 4 minute penalty for drafting.

"I'm over the moon to defend my title because I've never done that before. I love this beautiful city of Copenhagen and the crowd was amazing again this year. Jimmy made me work hard today, I was grinding my teeth towards the end and was going as hard as I could," the happy two time winner Tim Berkel said after the race.

Penalty meant work rage

A 4 minute time penalty for drafting – a lot of the pro's got drafting penalties – meant a frustrated Tim Berkel going hard on the run.

"I was a little disappointed of the penalty. I felt good on the bike and Bastie and I rode away towards the end so the penalty was very frustrating. After I served I started running angry and ran a ridiculous pace and had to calm myself down and settle in at a slower pace. I had Jimmy and Dejan breathing down my neck, so I got my nutrition and water in and I think Jimmy had worked hard to catch me. I managed to pull away towards the end but that last 8 km is something you don't wanna do in an iron distance race," Berkel tells us.

For Jimmy Johnsen it was as close as it could be for him to win his home ground race, but the strong Dane had to settle for second place only 35 seconds back after one of the most exciting iron-finishes of the year. Jimmy Johnsen swam 47:40, biked 4:36:55 and ran a 2:44:02 marathon. The top two athletes recognised great performances from the opponent and hugged at the finish line while third placed Dejan Patricevic (CRO) crossed the line just in front of Danish future hope Mads Vittrup-Pedersen who took 4th with an amazing 2:38:59 marathon.

Biking powerhouse Björn Andersson (SWE) had a solid swim in 3rd position, hammered the bike for a 4:19:47 best-of-the-day bike split, but faded heavily on the run and withdrew after about 28 km of the run.

Another sub-9 win for Keat in repeat

The women's race was much less close as last year's winner Rebekah Keat from Australia hammered the course like it was 2010 and finished off with a 3:05:02 marathon to reclaim her title with a blistering 8:52:42 finish.

It was her fifth iron distance race under 9 hours, two of them here in Copenhagen.



"I tried to focus on having a solid swim and not having to work too hard on the bike. I wanted to try to get my run legs back in this race and run around the 3 hours that is my level so that was great. Each lap the crowd just got bigger on the run, the second lap was good, third amazing and fourth incredible, I have never seen a crowd this big and it was fantastic today," Repeat-Keat says.

"Despite my big lead late in the run I'm not the type that's backing off, it's not in me, and I always run as hard as I can. I wasn't happy with my last two 3:13'ish marathons, so I wanted to show I could run fast. I'm happy about my marathon performance today but would love to crack three hours again."

Challenge Copenhagen

Results

Top 5 Men

1. Tim Berkel (AUS) 8:11:15
2. Jimmy Johnsen (DEN) 8:11:50
3. Dejan Patricevic (CRO) 8:12:18
4. Mads Vittrup-Pedersen (DEN) 8:13:21
5. Esben Hovgaard (DEN) 8:21:07

Top 5 Women

1. Rebekah Keat (AUS) 8:52:42
2. Asa Lundstrom (DEN) 9:35:31
3. Linda Schuecker (GER) 9:38:15
4. Karina Ottesen (DEN) 9:42:59
5. Helene Pallesen (DEN) 9:45:54

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