

Triathletes start season in France

TWO promising junior triathletes raced in France on 8 May at the Triathlon St Julien de Concelles. This was set to be a hotly contested race, as there were five French Championship places on offer to compete for.

A short, hard course was the perfect start to the season and a beautiful morning was appreciated by the spectators. A 400-metre lake swim was followed by a 10-kilometre closed-road bike leg on country roads, which were mostly flat with an exciting 2.5km run around the lake.

At the sound of the gun, 267 adult and junior participants set off, which made for close, frenetic racing. Joshua Thornton's strong swim ensured he led the race from the start and exited the water fourth overall after being unsure where the exit was.

He cycled with this group of five triathletes – with competitors being

allowed to draft – but the pace was relatively slow and it was too risky to set out alone. All five returned together to battle it out on the run. Thornton managed to hold his position despite going through some rough patches on the run and was rewarded with fifth place overall. And, as the first-placed Cadet he was awarded a French Championship place, but his native English tongue dampened the French excitement.

There was also a spectacular effort from 14-year-old Tom Stapley, who also had an impressive swim entering the first transition in sixth place overall. He then went on to lead a main group of cyclists near the front of the race, even though he had had to retrieve his timing chip during transition. Stapley enjoyed a good run within the adult field, courageously finishing ahead of many of his age group and 54th overall in the entire race.



Josh Thornton on top of the podium after finishing first Cadet at Triathlon St Julien de Concelles. (Picture supplied by Richard Stapley)