

## Multisport NZ Presidents Report 2009

There are not a lot of people that would dispute the fact that 2009 has been a challenging year. Despite the economic and pressures that has created, the 'recession' has highlighted what a resilient group of people the New Zealand Multisporters and Adventure Racer's are.

While race organisers report lower numbers, they have persevered and delivered many high quality events.

Volunteers have supported the events when many are probably sacrificing extra work or their own sporting time, and thousands of participants have pushed the recession aside saying "sure times are tough, but so are we".

Sponsor investment has also been under pressure, yet many companies are still doing what they can to support the events and competitors which give Kiwi's confidence and enjoyment in the NZ wilderness. In return Kiwi's are supporting the industry.

Looking back on the year it's been another boomer with world class performances from Kiwi's once again heading the field in most of the world's premier races.

New Zealand athletes entered the 3-major international events of the year as defending champions, The Wulong Mountain Quest in China, Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge in U.A.E and of course, the World Adventure Racing Championships in Portugal.

The world multisport scene started off with a hiss and a roar in February with legendary kiwis topping the 27th edition of the prestigious & world-renowned **Speight's Coast to Coast**. This was the first multisport race in the world and doubles as the individual world multisport championships, and it is still the one that everyone wants to do. For 2010 internationals are reported to have grown significantly.

### 2009 results

1st [Gordon Walker](#) 11:49 (2<sup>nd</sup> win)  
2nd [Trevor Voyce](#) 12:20  
3rd [Luke Chapman](#) 12:22

1st [Emily Miazga](#) 13:39 (3<sup>rd</sup> win)  
2nd [Jill Westenra](#) 13:38  
3rd [Elina Ussher](#) 13:54



There was a noticeable absence of 3 x Coast to Coast champion [Richard Ussher](#) who was focusing on Ironman. More about Rich later.

That Coast title has been very elusive for [Elina Ussher](#), but her talent is clear with her winning every other individual race she has entered since 2006, right up to now and breaking most course records along the way.

Recognition must go to [Robin Judkins](#) founder of the Coast to Coast and man with the tenacity to run the event every year since the early eighties, across a challenging Alpine and increasing legislative environments. Behind the scenes there's project manager [Dale Coulter](#), Robin's right and sometimes left hand man.

In February hard core **Multisport couple Ian & Nora Edmond** won the mixed section of the Alpine Epic 4 day Mountain Bike Race through the Southern Alps. The overall win went to Olympian Kashi Leuchs together with team-mate and fellow national representative Marcus Roy.

In May's **Keen Adventure Race** in Australia, it was again the kiwis that stole the crown from the Aussies. This year it was the Orion mixed team of **Anna Berthelsen and Stuart Lynch**, who bettered their 'runners up' place from 2008 with a faultless race. This dynamic duo was in the lead right from the start in this 500km, 5 day epic stage race. Their win was made even more remarkable by the fact that their team with one male and one female beat all the male pairs.



July saw **Rachel Cashin** from Taumarunui place second in the women's section of the brutal **Brasilia Multisport Race** in Brazil, despite suffering from illness that had dogged her over the previous days. **Jim Robinson** took out the veteran's category, and along with Cashin, survived more than a few wrong turns, and a searing 21km run over the baking hot Savannah. This race was held in the hottest part of the day, with the mercury hitting 35, and virtually no shelter from the sun, altitudes hitting between 1100m and 1400m, with over a thousand metres of climbing.

Kiwis were once again first this time at the **Primal Quest Adventure Race** in the Badlands USA in August. Leading the field home was current world champions Team Orion Health: **Wayne Oxenham, Anna Berthelsen, Brent Edwards and Stu Lynch** after an absolutely epic 6 days 10 hours racing 600 miles. Adventure Racing classic and former Coast winner **Neil Jones** racing for US based team Merrell was third.



Adventure Racer turned multisporter **Liam Drew** took out the **UK Coast to Coast** in September, after completing 4 days & 305km worth of mountain biking, kayaking, running, and swimming, and 7500m of climbing.

Kiwis have a strong winning tradition at the **Wulong Mountain Quest** in China and this year was no different.

In September at the multi day staged team multisport race Kiwi's up held the strong Kiwi heritage with Coast to Coast winner [Ian Edmond](#) (pic – right) winning with European team mates in Winterextrem5.com, followed by [George Christison](#) in USA based team Nike in second. Nailing home 3rd place were early race leaders team Tread with Kiwi's [Elina Ussher](#), [Jacob Roberts](#), [Marcel Hagener](#) and a sick [Richard Ussher](#).



Orion Health grabbed 5th: [Wayne Oxenham](#), [Stu Lynch](#), [Anna Berthelsen](#) & [Gordon Blythen](#). And just to top it all off, we had Air New Zealand/R and R Sport team come in 9th place: 2007 Coast to Coast champion [Fleur Pawsey](#), [Dougal Allan](#), & [Nathan Peterson](#).

The Kiwis raced to a convincing 2nd, 3rd, and 4th finish in November's **Adventure Racing World Champs** in Portugal. Nike Beaver Creek USA with Kiwi's [George Christison](#) & [Chris Forne](#), were looking the likely winners mid race through to the finish, but the controversial race format turned the leader table on its ear with the win taken by Team Helly Hansen & Nike second.

[Aaron Prince](#) racing in Swedish team Lundhags started off their 2009 world title race with a convincing win on the first day and chased a top spot through the remainder to place 3rd overall. Defending World Champions Orion Health ([Wayne Oxenham](#), [Stu Lynch](#), [Anna Berthelsen](#) & [Brent Edwards](#)) made it home in 4th, despite the team splitting near the end by mistake.



*Defending Champions Orion Health>>*

December rolled around with the **EcomotionPro Adventure Race** in Brazil, where husband and wife adventurers [Ian and Nora Edmond](#) endured 470km of very hot and very challenging terrain to claim 2nd place after having a stint in the lead, finishing just an hour and a half behind the winners.

And to top off an outstanding year of adventure racing and multisport, Kiwi's once again dominated the **Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge**. After six days of racing, New Zealanders clinched a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd overall, with team Qasr Al Sarab lead by [Richard Ussher](#) making it three wins in a row at the event.

Using all the experience gained from the last two years, Ussher once again brought together a world beating squad in the form of team members [Elina Ussher](#), [Nathan Fa'avae](#) & [Marcel Hagener](#) (right) to take the Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge in 46h19m06s. Team ADCO ([Fleur Pawsey](#), [Nathan Peterson](#), [Stu Lynch](#) and [Gordon Blythen](#)) followed very close behind, to finish 2nd, in 46h55m14s and Team Vibram Sport2000(French team, with Kiwi [Dwarne Farley](#)) nailing 3rd place in 47h26m16s.



Outstanding Kiwi athlete of the year goes to - [Richard Ussher](#) in what can only be called a mammoth year for him, across several sports. On top of all the races already mentioned, Richard won and set new race records for the **Are Extreme Nordic Multisport Championships** in Sweden, the **New Zealand Xterra Championships** and the **Southland 1/2 Ironman**. He also was 5th at **Ironman NZ** in a time of 8.35.56 but slashed over 30-minutes off that time at **Challenge Roth Germany**, to clock 8:02 which set a new New Zealand Ironman fastest time, previously held by Cameron Brown 8:08. Back into multisport he scored wins in the **Queen Charlotte Classic**, **Motu Challenge** and the best new event of the year, the **Lake to Lighthouse Challenge**.

While Richard Ussher is setting high goals for 2010, [Wayne Oxenham](#) (right) the captain of the former World Adventure Racing Championship team 'Orion', has decided to step down from international racing and spend more time recreating and to quote him "reading the Saturday paper". Thanks Wayne for your contribution to New Zealand adventure racing and all the best for whatever is next.



What's amazing about the outstanding results above, is that's the year as it was, and all top performances. Congratulations to those superb athletes.

Credit must go to the network of events, coaches, clubs, schools bringing Kiwi's up on a health diet of adventure which has ultimately set them up for international racing. It's refreshing to see the number of young athletes at the secondary schools championships and also entering school teams in Multisport & Adventure Races. Many were inspired racing alongside world champions Orion at the ARC earlier in 2009 when they took out the National AR Title (2010 will see the AR title contended at Rollo's Nelson).

Also a special mention must go to Nathan Fa'avae who's inspired hundreds of women to embrace the outdoors and enjoy NZ wilderness through his **Spring & Autumn Challenge adventure races**. The series grows from strength to strength with races held in an exciting location both in the North and South Island each year.

*Spring Challenge Nelson Lakes  
2009>>*



In closing, I'd like to thank the time, energy and dedication the association Committee have contributed. Thanks Steve, Kevin, Anna and Nathan for your 2009 efforts. Thanks also to Jen Knowles for her support.

I'd also like to thank the advisory panel of Anna Berthelsen, Fleur Pawsey, Emily Miagza and Richard Ussher for their contributions.

We hope to make 2010 a very significant year for Multisport and Adventure Racing so keep it up everyone, the future is bright.

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