

## **Strauss wins her first world title in Adelaide**

When it comes to international competitions the 16-year-old Gizelde Strauss is still a novice, but one would not have guessed this by the way she raced on Saturday to win the junior world title at the International Duathlon World Championships in Adelaide.

The Grade 10 learner at TuksSport High School performed like an 'old hand' throughout the race.

In the 5km run it did not take Strauss, Savannah Wayner (Australia), Katherine Badham (New-Zealand) and Sayu Arizono (Japan) long to break away from the rest of the runners.

This was the beginning of a cat and mouse game between the four athletes. Wayner had a one-second lead starting the 20km cycle, but it did not really matter because they all finished pretty much together and started the final 2.5km run together.

This was when Strauss threw down the proverbial gauntlet. She set out fast, challenging her opponents to catch her if they could but they were unable to keep up with the fleet-footed South African. She increased her lead with every stride to finish 20 seconds ahead of the second-placed Badham.

Strauss won in 1 hour 2 minutes and 5 seconds. Badham was second in 1:02:25, Arizono third in 1:02:29 and Wayner fourth in 1:03:00.

Her coach, the former Olympian triathlete, Kate Roberts (HPC), is justly proud of Strauss's performance.

"I was confident that Gizelde could get a top-three finish but she surprised me by winning outright."

According to Roberts, Strauss's participation at the World Duathlon Championships was a trade-off.

"Gizelde qualified to represent South Africa at the World Triathlon Championships in Chicago but I did not want her to compete because I thought she still needed to work on her swimming. As her coach it is important to me that Gizelda should be competitive in all three disciplines when she competes at a World Triathlon Championships for the first time. I want it to be a positive experience for her. A bad first experience could intimidate her the second time around and I do not want that to happen.

"As matters stand at the moment Gizelde is capable of cycling and running with the best and that is why I allowed her to compete at the World Duathlon Championships.

"The most important thing for all of us who are involved with Gizelde is to realize that she is still very young. The challenge for us is not to fast track her. There is a history in South African sports of talented youngsters being burnt out before they were able to fulfil their true potential. I don't want this to happen to Gizelde because I truly believe that she has what it takes to become the real deal."