



Young triathlete Jelle Bakker is off to Canberra for a ITU Sprint race this weekend.

Picture: SIMON DEAN

Jelle's sweating on top 10 finish

AFTER six years swimming endless laps four mornings a week Jelle Bakker had enough.

He liked keeping fit but his dreams of representing his native Holland in the pool at the Olympics had evaporated due to a lack of enthusiasm.

Jelle needed a new challenge and a trip out to Cronulla 18 months ago provided just that.

"I had seen a few triathlon races on TV and thought it would be something challenging to get involved in," he said.

"I didn't know much about the sport so I did some research on the internet with my parents.

"We found a coach down at Sutherland was holding a day



young guns
Andrew Prentice

for beginners so I went out there to see what it was all about."

This weekend Jelle will head to Canberra to compete in a national junior sprint triathlon race where he will need to swim 750m, ride 20km and finish with a 5km run.

"My aim is to finish in the top 10, that would be unreal," he said.

"I haven't been in the sport for that long so to set massive goals like winning races isn't realistic.

"I am really enjoying it all and it's good to know I have time to develop."

His coach Michael Delamotte, the man Jelle spoke to on his trip to the shire in 2007, is rapt with his progress.

"To be in the position he is in now is incredible," he said.

"He literally came in off the street, found out what was required and went away and trained in his own time.

"He got the qualifying times required to compete at the elite

level and I am excited at how he is progressing."

He also revealed if Jelle didn't seek a second opinion about a back injury recently his foray into triathlon racing would have been shortlived.

"He was told to walk away from the sport due to how much he was over-exerting himself," Delamotte said.

"I didn't agree with the diagnosis so I suggested he go and see someone else to see their thoughts.

"They gave him the green light to continue but suggested he tone down his training.

"Jelle is doing that and the good thing is I know he won't cut corners, he has a real desire to succeed."