

A few weeks ago we told the story of Mildura's Catherine Hall, an asthmatic who was hoping her condition wouldn't prevent her finishing one of the toughest events in the world. Then it was a case of 'Mission Ironman,' but now it's 'Mission Accomplished' after a...

Swim, ride, and run 14-hour epic

MILDURA'S Catherine Hall had a two-pronged goal when she lodged her entry form for last weekend's Busselton, WA, Ironman competition.

The first part was just to finish the race, and the second was to complete the gruelling event in the 14 to 15 hours time span.

And despite a bout of gastro suffered after the swim leg, Cath did just that, finishing in a time of 13.56, which was two-and-a-half hours quicker than her first ironman event at Port Maquarie four years ago.

An ecstatic Cath returned to Mildura this week, a bit stiff and sore, but "very satisfied and proud" at her performance.

And she got to meet one of her sporting heroes...wheelchair athlete John McLean, and was happy to report that she had raised more than \$550 for the foundation in his name that raised

much-needed funds to help young Australians who are confined to wheelchairs

"John was grateful for all the support of everyday people, and was there on the course to cheer us on through the hard parts of the run," she said.

Cath's achievement at the ironman event was extra special, considering the fact she is an asthmatic, and 10 years ago couldn't run more than 50 metres, or climb stairs, without puffing and gasping for breath.

It was one of the reasons the Sydney-born 34-year-old moved to Mildura, where she is now employed as a biodiversity officer with Mildura Rural City Council.

And hardly a day goes by when Cath isn't out before or after work, or at weekends, running, cycling or swimming. She particularly enjoyed the swim leg of last weekend's ironman.

"The water was beautifully clear, with abundant marine life," she said, "although at times we were swimming through large swarms of jellyfish...the non-stinging variety thank goodness!"

She said the bike course was mostly flat on good roads, with only one section really open to the wind. Athletes were lucky to get a cool day with cloud cover, making for great racing conditions.

"The support of the locals and volunteers was amazing," she said, "and the atmosphere in the town was fantastic. I finished the race, endured an ice bath and a cold beer, and went back to the finish line to see the last few people come in over the 16 hour mark.

"All up, it was a great day. I'm a bit stiff and sore, but satisfied with my result, and proud of the contributions we made to raising funds for the John McLean Foundation."



• MR HERO: Mildura's Catherine Hall meets one of her heroes, wheelchair athlete John McLean, whose charity has a major goal of 'putting big smiles on little faces.' Cath raised \$550 for the cause.