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Crashing Back Down to Earth

As we all know cycling presents many ups and downs. This year, my road season presented a roller coaster of emotions as I struggled with injuries once again! It seems to be a year for Aussies crashing, both in the men's peloton and in the women's. I certainly feel as though I have had my fair share for the year with my latest crash resulting in a broken wrist and elbow. It was my first race with the National Road team for the season in Wilmington USA and we were looking for a good result as there was a diamond necklace up for grabs for first place! I got caught up in a crash halfway through the race and landed heavily on my left arm but was able to rejoin and with the help of my team mates finished second in the bunch sprint.

After assessing my arm, it was determined that it was just a bad sprain so I continued to race and train for the following week before realising the pain I was feeling wasn't quite acceptable for a sprain. An X-ray confirmed I had a broken scaphoid, so the next day I was organised onto a flight back to Australia. Being a dedicated athlete, by the time I had landed back in Australia I had already worked out when I would be returning to racing in my own mind. I'd worked out all the possibilities even with the varying recovery times I had been given due to the difficult nature of scaphoid breaks. After having my past two road seasons end early due to injury I was determined to have a different outcome this year.

After having a full evaluation of my arm back in Australia I was given fantastic news – only three weeks in a cast. Perfect! I set myself the goal of being back in Europe in time for the Women's Giro. Looking back, embarking on a 10 day tour for my return to racing was a solid goal but I needed something high to aim for to give me the motivation to sit on the ergo for what seemed like eternity. I was so committed to this goal, as soon as I returned to Australia I trained relentlessly on the ergo, used time trail bars on the road to take the pressure off my wrist and spent many hours in the gym to hold onto as much of my fitness as I could. All seemed to go to plan and after four weeks at home I was elated to be back on a plane to Italy. Little did I know the course for this year's Giro had changed and now consisted mainly of hills and

hill top finishes, something sitting on an ergo is not entirely conducive with to say the least!

Regardless of the race profiles, I had committed myself to the Giro and wanted to do the best I could but this all came to a bitter end by day eight. My elbow had been getting progressively more painful each day. I contacted the doctors back in Australia for advice. It turned out that at the time of breaking my scaphoid I had also fractured the top of my radius (elbow), which wasn't detected initially. On day eight, I made the decision to listen to my body and pull out of the Giro, something I had failed to do for the past seven weeks. I had a CT scan and X-ray, which showed that the fracture in my elbow hadn't fully healed and was causing me the pain. Emotions were running high. Again I got on a plane and returned to Australia.

Looking back it was always a gamble for me and for the coaches to allow me to return to racing so soon. The one thing I can say though – I backed myself. Sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't. I'm proud of my commitment and am now focusing on what is next, not what has happened.

Upon arriving back in Australia it was thought that I had also done some damage to my elbow joint and the problem needed to be further investigated. This was goodbye to my road season and time to start focusing on being fully recovered in time for the track. So, I guess it's back to the good old ergo again! 🚴

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