

Charlene Parrott

25 to 29, Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Sometimes it's the little things that help you focus. For Charlene Parrott of Port Coquitlam, B.C., it was the message in a fortune cookie that she opened the night before the race: Your luck will reach the height of your ambition.

Vancouver was the 29-year-old athlete's second World Championship after she raced in Honolulu in 2005. With Port Coquitlam's proximity to Vancouver, Parrott had a hometown advantage and she relished the huge number of family and friends yelling encouragement at her.

Parrott says she was nervous heading into the race, though Pacific Rim coach Shaun Callaghan had prepped her well, literally helping her to find the pool on some early mornings.

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"Walking up to the water, wind blowing and seeing the white caps was a tad scary," she says. "I just thought you're a strong swimmer." Then the horn sounded and her race had begun. "The waves were huge ... up and down, water in my mouth, then down to the stomach."

If the swim had been a bit longer, Parrott says she may have been able to bridge the gap to the leaders, though she wasn't particularly disappointed.

As she ran into T1, Parrott says: "I decided to take the extra time and put on a jacket and gloves and I was so glad I did. I felt great on the bike, strong. I powered up the hill at Prospect Point [in Stanley Park] like I had machines for legs."

Heading onto the run was a different story, as her feet were still numb from the swim. After some positive self-talk, she was running. She battled with cramps, which she credits to the unexpected drinking she did during the swim.

"After [the cramping] was gone, my running was faster and faster with each lap. If

feature a race for the ages

