

# Ramblers Cycling Club – Mutiny Crystal Road Race, July 2019

13<sup>th</sup>

## A Grade

With quite an even playing field in A grade without many A Elite Riders meant that the pace was high, but nothing was going to get away, and would most probably end in a bunch sprint.

Kirsty, Chris and Darryl all tried to get some daylight on the small peloton, but nothing was able to stick, and they were bought back. Leading into the final lap there was a

bit of cat and mouse, mainly with Chris being the mouse, and Kirsty the Cat. Into the final straight and Chris made a move for the finish, probably 1km to early, but kept pushing. Kirsty made contact, and Chris tried again – He says he thought the finish was much earlier. Doug McIntosh was loitering around the rear of the peloton ready to launch, coming from behind to take the win, with Chris's tricks not really working for him as he finished 6<sup>th</sup>. Mike Newall and Jason Kelly rode strong the whole race as usual.



## B Grade

B grade said goodbye to Winter briefly with 17 keen bicyclists lining up for race 7 of the Winter series on a positively balmy 18-degree day.

From the off the pace was frantic. Actually, no it wasn't, with all the big guns waiting for all of the other big guns to fire the first shot, sort of like a Clint Eastwood spaghetti western but with less horses and more lycra. "Hulk" Woodward soon tired of the glacial pace and put a wee dig in, but was soon pulled back. Funny how that yellow jersey turns you in to Nigel no-mates.

And so it continued - Strat had a wee go, "A Bomb" Ashe tried his luck, Kerry "Wakey" Wakely put the hurt on for a bit - nothing stuck, not even a glorious effort from Off The Backi Acki (now officially renamed Attaki Acki), and repeated digs from a very strong looking Hannah Van Kampen. There was a mere sniff of a break forming with Hulk, "The Beast of B Grade" Greenwood and our well respected and much adored National Champion Lindsay Sheppard stretching the gap a little on lap 3, but Strat was having none of that and soon reeled them all back in.

Beastcam footage of one of Hulk's 984 attacks here :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-EBqXxeyZOI&feature=share> - check out the wattbomb required from Greenwood to bring him back!

We then settled in to a pattern of watching Woodward do most of the work for the final lap, which was fantastic for everyone except Woodward. At the final turn in to Crystal a new rider was introduced to the race, with a special guest appearance from Zane "Trailer" Alexander.

Sprint time, and the usual Middle Road bunfight had been replaced with an all new Crystal Road bunfight - narrow roads and a full bunch going for glory lead to a few hairy moments (and a DSQ for Attaki Acki).

Regan "Boom" Bang proved too strong in the sprint and took the win, with Hulk Woodward second and Special Guest Appearance Alexander third. Special mention also goes to Chris "I hate this course and I'll probably get dropped" Hansen, who rolled home 4th.

## C Grade

It's kind of a ritual at a Ramblers race, where I am sure that we all check to see who turns up to the race. Do a quick head count on the numbers. See whether it is going to be load shared by a few OR maybe hide at the back and let others do the work. So, prior to rolling out I had "money" on Mike Burne to take this one, and also Sprint specialist Hilary Green ( who moved up from D Grade) just for this race?

On the first turn into Stock Road on lap 1, the pace was hot. Attempts to drop riders and to make a break was very clear. No surprises, Mike Burne, James Hillard, Steve Watson, David McCallum were all trying to hurt us. David McCallum our yellow jersey holder wore the jersey with pride, he never at any stage of the race sat behind the bunch to just cruise.

14 started and 14 still together after 1.5 Laps. David Ligan and Luke McGrath thought maybe it is time to attack. They both stayed away briefly to enjoy the glory of saying "we tried". both were soon caught by the bunch led by James and Mike. So, maybe it is wise to see what unfolds in another lap or so.

Bunch was still together after Lap 3, heading into Crystal Road turn, Mike Burne, James Hillard and David Ligan tried again to create a breakaway.

But as we all know, a bunch working together is a powerful force. So that did not work.

So, looks like this will end up being a scrappy race finish. Strong riding by Sandy Wiggins and Michelle Hutchins showed that this could be their race also.

Half way through the final Lap, Callum Campbell decided to go solo and opened up a gap. Again, this was short lived.

Now that we are into the final kilometres to the finish line, it is a sprinter's race but also for those who dares, who can take some risk, to victory.

Sneaky Steve Watson, found a gap on the left-hand side of the road almost on the grass verge to position himself. No more gaps appear after that.

Mike Burne, the hot favourite to win, rode powerfully towards the chequered flag leaving James Hillard and Steve Watson battle it out for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Visiting riders Marcus and Jackson Fellowes (father and son team) rode really well, and contributed to the spark of this Flat Fast Mutiny course.

## D Grade

Indian Summer conditions lure out ten competitors in D Grade to tackle our premier flat course for rouleurs: The Mutiny Road circuit. This is where big dogs can shine and skinny dudes may suffer, with no guarantees of course, we are all merely pawns in this amateur cycling game.

D Grade decides to perform a Sunday roll for most of the circuit, with only a little rotation, a little rock and roll. There is the odd adrenaline-spike-bungie-cord compression

in the peloton where wheels almost touch and shouts of “Oi!!!” ring out to restore a clean racing line. We trundle along at a pedestrian 34km/h, two ladies and eight gents, playing for time. No moves are made in the slightest and the race is in danger of being confined to the beige file, when suddenly last week’s vainquer (Chris) overshoots the turn on the second lap and has to loop back, a rare error!



Effectively down to nine in the bunch, we settle back sedately, nibble on glucose, sip on bottles and wait. And wait, and wait. Gas tanks are full, and the results will be determined solely in a dash for the line. Far be it for the author to assume the internal machinations of all competitors, but it appears the sprinting tactics are played out 50/50. Half the riders have the guts to risk getting squeezed in a scary position for maximum points and half are simply trying not to die because they have holidays coming up, or work tomorrow, or have promised their significant others they will be home, unscathed, in time for Chardonnay.

The final 200m of our 38km race sees the action of the day. Ian W, who has ridden into the breeze on his own in the left hand gutter in this last straight, is too strong, he powers through on a fabulous line to take the win. Stephen S, recently returned to racing and improving by the minute, also picks a great trajectory and finishes just over a second behind for the silver. Dougie Y nabs another handy third place and is closely followed by the pack, who, having jostled, must now pedal and pray. The bunch whips across respectively: Mike Y, Edward W, Sophie E, Caroline R, Simon W (first race back) and Andrew W. Chris J, after the early unfortunate-ness, completes a valiant solo as le Lantern Rouge.

It was a day for tactics rather than suffering in D Grade, and the cycling goss is that the climbers will be out for maximum level revenge this week at Raukawa...



## E Grade

Once again E grade fielded a full contingent of 15 riders including, a few visitors, to finish as an almost complete group, but young Ferg Cornish (from Auckland,) made an early break to hold on easily to the finish.

It is pleasing to see Rebecca Clark riding well on her first outing after re-joined us after a long break. On the third lap she lost contact, but as the peloton was stopped by the marshal at the Mutiny Road/Middle road intersection, Rebecca was able to re-join -much to her delight.

Kevin Lloyd was unable to match his last week's form, dropping from first to 11th place. It looks like ever consistent Mary Cullen is about to regain the yellow jersey.

Our grade needs to heed Ken's words **'those in front must ride as far left as practicable'** - not hug the centre line. It was noticed Ken in his truck had to drive on the right grass verge while passing from behind.

Thanks to the Kelly's' kind offer for the use of their property as a venue- this feels much safer as a finishing area than the built up area of Havelock North

## F Grade

Saturday was another great day for cycling, warm with little wind.

It was great to see a great bunch of 10 line up for the F grade race after weeks of very small numbers. We had the usual faithful, some young ones, some back from time off and some visitors. We were neutralised from start into Stock Road by our mentor rider and then we were off. Rotation went really well and the first lap saw most of us stay together. Second lap split the bunch with five remaining in the front bunch. The tandem being one of these. It was great to see Hagen, a young rider, up there with us. Carole, great to see you back on form, Angus and Peter completed the five. Working together we all reached the finish line together. A very enjoyable race.