



Ramblers Cycling Club – Torrens/Raukawa Road Return Race, 20th July 2019

A Grade

The usual A grade hitters turned up for the battle of Torrens Hill. Word on the road was that Luke, Will and Max did 2 hours before the race – everyone would assume they might have been a bit knackered come the race, NO CHANCE. The three escaped the A Graders before the Raukawa Hill and pushed on. Back with the “left overs” they lapped hard till the base of Torrens, until Jason Kelly unleashed his Tour De France Climbing Form (from last year) and lead from start to finish up Torrens, recording a time of: 9:28, only 7 seconds off his PB. Yet the Elite lads were hussing and did the climb in 9:02 (Will and Max) with Luke not far behind. Visitor Ewan Cousins hung onto Jason’s wheel where Chris Clark and Mike Newall were distanced at the top – but engaged ‘mountain bike madness’ mode and bombed the decent to catch the lean climbers. This madness leaving Kirsty, Darryl and Doug somewhere behind in their dust.

Will Green took out the sprint over our favourite ‘trackie’ Max Williams. Mike Newall showing some impressive form managed to outsprint the others and take the win. Visitor Ewan edged out Jason for 2nd, with Chris Clark not far behind.

Next weekends BOTs teams race will be a different kettle of fish, with all sorts of team tactics already been planned out.

B Grade

Torrens: a word that strikes fear in to the heart of any cyclist with a BMI of over 19, a classic Hawkes Bay climb promising 10 minutes of sweaty contemplation and a reassessment of your choice of weekend activity.

With a couple of the big hitters having the weekend off (Hulky Woodward with family obligations, Beasty Greenwood attending some sort of cake eating seminar) the pace heading out was eminently sensible. This didn’t stop Zano popping off the back over the Raukawa bumps, only to reappear at a later date having engaged cloaking mode, ridden to the top of Torrens faster than anybody else, then reappearing down the bottom of the hill having barely raised a sweat.

Up Torrens she was all on and the race exploded. “A Bomb” Ashe was off the front in no time, along with his accomplice James “Evil” Evans. Behind followed a small group, then another small group featuring our adored National Champion Lindsay Sheppard, then a Kent, then another Kent, then a couple more. A couple more riders, not a couple more Kents. Four of them would get really confusing.

The descent turned out to be far less interesting than expected with the road having dried out, and the chasing group caught the Climby Boys just after the Burma Bump. The group chasing the chasing group (Carol, Lindsay, Andy and Shane) put in a big effort to close the gap, but ran out of road. Meanwhile The Kents had valiantly decided to form a rear guard, ready and waiting to assist anyone with punctures, dropped bottles, weather updates etc. What a couple of good Kents.

Up front the break stayed together until the home straight, when Strat “O’spheric” Ellingham launched an early run at the line, only to be caught and passed by “A-Bomb” for a well-earned win. Evil Evans was a fraction of a second behind in 2nd place, with Shaun Demanser 3rd.

C Grade

The race this week going up Torrens Hill did not deter too many C Graders. In fact, C grade fielded the biggest turnout with 18 riders to test their climbing legs. Good to see a few visitors also, turning up to see what Torrens Hill is all about.

All 18 stayed together on the 3 Raukawa mini climbs, with no one really keen on making a decisive move. As expected the race lit up when we hit the foothill up Torrens. The bunch eventually disintegrated within a few minutes into the climb. Luke McGrath, Dylan Cameron, Phil Robson, Warren and Tyler Mumby headed towards the turnaround without the threat of being hunted down by a few scattered chasing group of up to 4 or 5 riders.

The lead group stayed pretty much intact, with 11 chasing riders led by David McCallum, assisted by Superwoman Sandy Wiggins and James Hillard. However, the gap was too big for the chase group to spoil the party. Some riders in the chase group commented that PBs were achieved on their Strava segment from Raukawa Hall to the finish line. So, if it's on Strava then it's not fake news...

There were some very impressive downhill skills on display also, especially from Gavin Bush who rallied his followers down Torrens. Those followers, Doug Thompson, Steve Watson, Mike Burne gained substantial momentum to make up for lost time and latched themselves to be part of the 11-chase group.

Dylan won this race in a sprint finish to make it 2 from 2. Luke McGrath retains the yellow jersey to remain on top of the points table. Good to see Finn Van Kampen back racing again.

D Grade

A small group of 10 riders in D meant that no one was brave enough to attack on the way out and we mostly stuck together. Doug, Chris and young Edward had the best climbing legs and as they put the pressure on up the last climb before the hall, the bunch dropped to eight. The calm weather meant that turning at the cone didn't result in a horrendous wind change so it was now time for a couple of digs - firstly Gemma had a short burst which lead to Caroline putting in a break which she held strongly, just out of reach. As we approached the longer hill, Caroline's recent effort proved too much and only seven were eyeing up the finish. Ian started his wind up and the hill climbers hung on - Ian taking the win with Doug second and Edward a credible third.

E Grade

Numbers were down to 7 riders in E Grade on Saturday- not counting Dave Lay who punctured right on the start line and had to forfeit his race. Last week we had 17 riders - Newcomer Phillip Doolan took line honours once again just pipping Mal Warren who worked his way from the back of the sprint- followed by Mary Cullen with her yellow jersey. Only 4 seconds separated the 7 riders. Rosemary Weskett must be surely the most honest rider doing more than her share of the work.

Bad news from the Tour de France- Poor old Noel Evans who was having his 1st ride over the Pyrenees. He was on a cycleway when a rider in front lost momentum. Noel dropped a chain and could not un-cleat in time and fell on his hip at a concrete kerb. Apparently receiving a displaced fractured hip. He is continuing the tour in the bus- Colin McDonald his team mate is continuing the tour.

F Grade

After a damp, coltish morning Saturday afternoon showed us some sun to make pleasant cycling conditions. Only five regulars started in the F grade. From the start Carol led us single file at a steady pace until into Raukawa Road. Then working as a team we all managed to stay together until the first hill where the tandem was dropped.

By the turn around Carol was leading Angus and Peter. Tandem not too far behind. Once around the turn the Tandem put foot down in an endeavour to catch up one or more of F grade. Letter was finally caught up ,passed and then he chased ,passed on hill and the Chase was on again. Tandem finally caught up and passed and managed a third place, Carol took line honours from Angus. Well done to all.

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