

Ramblers Cycling Club – Valley/Raukawa Road Race

17th August 2019

A Grade

Numbers were a bit slim for the battle around Valley Road. Five 'A Graders' and Max Williams set off into the headwind, rough road straight stretch that is SH50. Did we all have flat tyres or just bad legs? When turning into Valley Road the first time we realised it was just the dead road and we were into it. Darryl stretching his legs on the little bump before the main climb – covered instantly by Jase.

Nothing too exciting happened on the first lap, a few tried to get some daylight on the bunch, but unfortunately this was to no success. Through into the second lap and there were some burners put in, but all together for what looked like it would be a 6 man (women) sprint to the line.

Kirsty had tried to bribe the other A graders to beat Jason in the finish for her points management, so she could get more points than him. Chris Clark had this in mind, went SUPER early and may have used up all his bullets about 200m short of the line. Max showed his youth and sprinting ability to easily win the sprint over Mike Newall. With the rest not far behind, all they (and the rest of Bridge Pa) could hear was Chris asking everyone why we didn't sit up when he launched his attack? Next time, maybe leave it 200m later and you'll arrive at the finish line 1st next time!

Now with 2 points separating Jason and Kirsty – the next two weeks will provide some competitive racing!

B Grade

A storm threatened over Raukawa as a decent sized field of 21 riders headed out for two laps of the classic Valley circuit – a fast and furious loop with just enough bumps to make things interesting.

Pre race the smack talk had been outrageous, with Zano calling everybody else in the grade "a bunch of upstarts who were about to get schooled by the Z man", and "A Grade" Ashe referring to Hulk Woodward as "a tired old man who looks terrible in yellow"*

*they may not have said any of this and I may have added it solely for dramatic effect.

From the off Jack "The Lad" Spencer completely failed to launch his now trademark bonkers attack. This may or may not have had something to do with Jack feeling somewhat tired and emotional having allegedly stolen a road sign the night before, only to remorsefully return it pre race. Allegedly.

First time up the Valley climb and BOOM Woodward hits the afterburners, staying away until half way back down Raukawa. The pace required to reel the green freak in was clearly too much for four riders, who decided to roll back and catch up with old friends in C grade, with a couple retiring early to get first dibs on the white chocolate TimTams.

Lap two and the race was slowed by:

- A tractor.
- Some sheep.
- Some dogs.
- "A Grade" Ashe's bike falling apart.
- Loud complaints about Woodward's forgotten race number in a fruitless attempt to rattle him and maybe drop his FTP by 100 watts or so.

The remaining riders stayed together until sprint time, where Sam Park busted out the

track sprint skillz for the win, with "I am not a number" Woodward second, and A Grade Ashe third. Legendary Rider of the Race Award : "A Grade" Ashe – throws a spoke, pulls over and rips it from the rim with his teeth, chases back on, comes third.

A broken spoke

Alcohol fumes from Spencer

Tractor, dog and sheep

C Grade

15 starters turned up for a barmy, windy Valley/Raukawa race. Not having done this race for a while, everyone had forgot about the highway 50 cobbles and belgy cross-winds that make this a Bridge Pa trademark. The group lapped steadily to get this suffer-fest out of the way.

The taps opened up on Valley Rd climbs followed by Raukawa Rd with no one too motivated about breaking the race up. Although James Hillard attacked on several occasions, no others were interested to join in on the suffering. Throughout the race Dave McCallum joined up with the retired Wiggins tandem of Craig and Sandy who covered the race left, right and centre.



Watto, Cameron Brothers, and James Hillard broke away on main Raukawa Rd climb lap 2. Their break away attempt proved to need more petrol as Dave, Sandy, Craig and Warren Mumby worked hard to shut it down with 5km to go thankfully. Dylan executed another spectacular sprint finish win which he is making a habit of from young Tyler Mumby, and a well-earned 3rd for Sandy Wiggins putting hubby into 4th. The Watt-myster continues on in the yellow jersey for another race with just 2 races remaining.

Born and bred Waipukurau local Simon Pepper returned to racing who was great to have back for some C Grade humour. Wayne File never scared to get to the front whilst Warren Simpson returned to his appropriate grade after taking D Grade honours last week. Warren was a force to be reckoned with on the flats.



D Grade

Finally, some hills. With the ride half the distance we usually ride, a different approach was taken by some of the stronger riders. We were all friends until the first climb in Valley Road. Two riders went off the front and there was a mad scramble by those that could, to get across the gaps to join up. Gemma, Mark and Chris were the drivers and a smaller front group formed.

Big ups to Chris Jarrett who then went off on a solo ride around the valley to the second climb next to Burma Road. At this point Dean Clifford and David Barclay broke away again and got a gap of several hundred meters. The chase group of Gemma Chris Mark and the author set out to chase them down. Unfortunately, the said author did not contribute as much as he should have. Bugged was the word I heard mentioned.

Over the last little climb and the front two were gone burgers. Gemma showed how strong she is currently in chasing with Mark Chris and yours truly following. There was a further gap back to Brent Chamberlain, Philip Doolan and Martin Gilkinson. I did mention to the others in my group that maybe we could go around again. I cannot repeat the response I got back. It is great to see new riders in our grade. You will only get stronger and more competitive as we head into Spring.

E Grade

With three of our most colourful riders out with broken legs or dislocated shoulders i.e. Noel Evans, Derek Wardy (legs) and Dave Marrett (shoulder) one lap of the Valley road circuit was the race for the 11 E graders hanging on the tail were the Four F graders.

The stiff breeze meant up highway 50 had everyone pulling their weight this was soon to change into Valley Road and the Fluro kid Warren Gunn launched the first of his attacks chased by points leader Mary and the rest - Hopeful Hartley, Jo Robson, Jason Ware the first victims of the attack

Drakey attacked then Ian Wright pushed on up to the turn with even" missing at the front" Mal Warren taking a turn. Gunn fired another attack passing the hall and we were now aware that his training over the last two months was making him a threat to the status quo.

Rosemary as she so frequently does lead the charge to silence the Gunn with Mary and Drakey upping the pace on the downhill. With three weeks hill climbing in France the new light weight Colin McDonald was making his moves on any little rise a chance to scare the heavy weights with his acceleration—look out on uphill finishes. Mary and Drakey set the pace up the last big hill with Mary setting off from the top as if her yellow jersey was at risk.

The third Gunn attack had him away by 150 metres with a km to go. Mary's chase was swallowed up by "missing at the front" Warren, Drakey fast finishing, Dave Lay with the "fluro Kid" Gunn firing a warning shot across our transponders ---- don't mess with me!

F Grade

Well once again Winter was held at bay long enough for the Ramblers Saturday race, Valley/ Raukawa road to finish. Saturday saw four cycles line up for the start of the F grade race. Ken started us with the E grade, which was great for a k or two until pace got too much for the tandem. After pushing into wind it was a relief to turn into Valley Road and spot a cyclist ahead.

Turned out to be Dave Chote, who, unfortunately for him dropped his chain on the uphill. Tandem passed him fully expecting to be caught up any moment. But yay no not today. No more cyclists were sighted and finally the finish line was in sight. Seems Carol had line honours again being about 2mins ahead of Angus.

Well done we all finished.