

Thrills and a Spill at Round One of the Burkes Cycles Speed League

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Wellington turned on the weather for the the first ever Burkes Cycles Speed League as riders of all ages ripped up Hataitai Velodrome in a variety of races. Overall league points for the season-long competition were up for grabs across different grades. There were some great battles between riders to claim as many points as possible and win the right to wear custom Champion System league leaders' jerseys at the next race meeting.

Lee Evans, who next week heads off to Invercargill for the summer, won the A Category 10 lap scratch, just catching and passing Nick Warren, who had spent four laps ahead of the pack. Sprinter Russell Fairbrass took the Elimination race ahead of Louis Higgison and Warren.

A touch of wheels brought down three riders in the points grabber race on lap three, after Peter Moore and Harry Kent had nabbed the first two sets of points each. Louis Higgison, James Truebridge and Harry Kent all hit the deck, suffering grazes but escaping serious injury.

Jon Barnes, 15, was the standout in the B Category races, winning the 8 lap scratch and points race and scoring a handful of points in the 5 lap points grabber event. He didn't have it easy however, as seniors Mark Coburn, Regan Bang, and under 17s Jed McDermot and Ben Humphries pushed him hard throughout the afternoon.

The biggest field was in the C Category, where Renita Vanderhelm won the 6 lap scratch ahead of Ollie Wood and Liam Sherlock. Wood got the better of Sherlock in the Elimination race with Martine Barnes third. Wood also came out tops in the 5 lap points grabber, adding nine points to his overall league tally.

Fronting up for the Lemond Fitness Power Play were Zac Blakely, Lee Evans and Holly Blakely who had just 20 seconds to record their maximum power to weight ratio. Evans notched up a massive 1646 watts, resulting in a 17.30 watt/kg ratio to lead the competition ahead of Zac Blakely with a 17.10 watt/kg ratio.

The final mixed category races demanded cunning and guile and didn't disappoint. B Category rider Regan Bang scored a prime point at half distance and won the final sprint after having to work hard with Lawrence Farrington to catch the C Category bunch who started with a half lap headstart. Farrington was second, Wood third and Vanderhelm fourth.

Tactics came into play for the Team Scratch with Barnes and Redwood estates team mate, under 17 rider Zac Blakely breaking away around the ten lap mark joining Burkes Cycles' Warren. The trio stayed ahead to the finish with Blakely and Barnes attempting to block Warren in on the final lap, however the senior rider just managed to sprint ahead for the win.

Overall, Russell Fairbrass and Regan Bang share the senior honours for Burkes Cycles Speed League leader, while Ollie Wood leads the under 15s. Jon Barnes heads up the under 17s grade and Renita Vanderhelm is first female.