

MIDWAY MOTORS ONE DAY TOUR – October 29TH 2017. Race Report.

The day promised to be a scorcher, but a cloak of early fog lurked at Henley. Also eerie was the distinct lack of competitors, even as it ticked on towards 10.00AM, Go time. Turns out I had my timings a bit confused, even though I set the timings and did the race poster hahaha. Happily, a good mix of riders and some out of town talent turned up keen to race.

With sign on and briefing complete, marshals mobilised, riders primed, we were ready to rumble with Stage 1 on the Classic Berwick Block. From my marshal point at the corner of Otakia and Maungatua, things were getting interesting even on the first lap. First through was a combined Cat 1 & 2 group. It looked fairly civilised but I heard some rumblings later that a few words were shared... The group settled and stayed together – no doubt it was a fairly hot pace – with the all important positioning the second time around the Centre Rd corner on every one's mind. Louie Harris did a burner with Carl Haddon chasing. It is a LONG finishing straight if you go early. Putting on the power at the right time it was Jerome Wigger in first, Michael Greaves second and Dave Thomson third. The Cat 1 group of three powered on for their last lap – clocking in 5 minutes faster than the first two circuits – ouch. Ioan Fuller took the stage from Kees Duyvestyn and Paul Gough.

Cat 3 had already split into two groups by corner two, led by the young guns and valiantly accompanied by hard working Chris Ford going hard. Mr (Greg) and Ms (Becky) Kerr and Phil Te Tana were all smiles – ok, bit of a gurn going on – in pursuit, but the hares had bolted. How much carnage can unfold on a straight, quiet, flatish road on the Taieri? Quite a bit – on the second circuit with exquisitely bad timing a local farming sent out the milkers unsupervised and straight into the Cat 3 front group! Fear not, in a high-vis said farmer ran across the road to wrest control of the situation and succeeded in sending the terrified cows back across the road, straight in front of Cat 3 again! All handled magnificently, the race continued without disaster and was resolved with a great sprint and Pablo Paulsen in 1ST from Hunter Gough and Jonathan Fish.

Cat 4 had a slightly disjointed stage but stayed together into the finishing straight. Brendon Ward, Colin Horton and Madeleine Gough taking the first three spots in race 1. Cat 5 and our two U13 riders started together. By corner 2 Marshal Erwood had several hundred metres on the group and was off! Brent Horton was looking edgy as well and he rode on to take first place from Sarah Ford and Lily Smart. Marshal had a great ride for first U13, but how determined was Jack McLeod – pro deal! Great shots of Jack expertly railing the corners and soloing to a strong finish.

By Stage 2 most were a little droopy – by Dunners standards it was cooking! We ditched the Berwick Climb but injected the infamous cow express overpass on Marshal West. Ahhhh, maybe a little warning for the non-locals would have good – heads up, this section features massive potholes, gravel, bovine excrement, and ducks crossing!!! Alas, Lily Smart succumbed to a puncture here but got the benefit of a swift wheel change from the following support vehicle. Some shenanigans had clearly occurred in Cat 2 as several strong riders were dropped. Jerome Wigger again putting down the hammer ahead of Stephen Fish and Dave Thomson. Duyvestyn and Fuller were zig zagging at full noise trying to drop one another leading into the Henley-Berwick corner on the final lap. Paul Gough had paid the price but was TT-ing well in pursuit. The two speedsters slowed to a crawling cat and mouse leading into the final turn onto Centre Rd, allowing Gough to re-join. Ioan Fuller recovered and sprinted for the win from Gough. Duyvestyn suffered an ill-timed mechanical issue in the final hundred metres.

Excellent work from Becky Kerr in stage 2, hanging tough with the Cat 3 front group. In a reverse of the first stage, Hunter edged out Pablo with Jonathan again in third. In Cat 4 it was Madeleine Gough from Brendan Ward and Colin Horton. Others who had worked hard through-out suffered in the final sprint – but their work was noted. Brent Horton again took the stage for Cat 5 from Lily Smart and Sarah Ford. Marshal and Jack recording first and second in U13.

A stage full of drama and not just for the riders. David Geraghty was hurtfully abandoned on his marshalling corner. Refusing to succumb to the shock of being deserted, survival instincts kicked in. Armed with his high-vis, good looks and charm he managed to hitch a ride back to the Hall, and is recovering well.

With points close across the categories and the temperatures soaring, it was all on the line for the final TT stage. A gruelling 4km gravel into a head side wind. It was a decisive stage in some Categories. The final positions were:

Cat 1: Ioan Fuller

Cat 2: Stephen Fish

Cat 3: Hunger Gough

Cat 4: Brendan Ward

Cat 5: Brent Horton

U13: Marshal Erwood.

A huge thanks to our sponsor Midway Motors and Chris Henderson, and Stew Thomas and Michael Greaves for their assistance on the day. The marshals and race organising team did a sterling job – huge kudos to you all, Louise, Carl, David, Megan, Greg, Vanessa. It was a buzz to see the support vehicles on course, thank you. The riders – no crashes and competitive riding – great work. And a final shout out to the weather!