



Australian Open Road Championships

7 - 11 January 2009 BALLARAT

Media Release



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Ryan, Bobridge and Tomic on top in Ballarat

Queenslands Carla Ryan reclaimed her crown when she won the Mars Australia Elite Womens Individual Road Time Trial at the Scody Australian Open Road Championships held in Ballarat today.

The 2007 champion covered the 28km course in 41:21.05, edging out South Australias Alexis Rhodes (41:21.67) by a mere six tenths of a second, with Barcelona Olympic road race gold medallist Kathy Watt in third place (41:34.19).

I didnt expect it. I wanted to just go out and enjoy it 'cos' I hadnt had awesome preparation, Ryan said.

A former Victorian who moved from regional Victoria to Queensland in 2003, the diminutive Ryan battled strong winds midway through the race.

The wind was crazy, and especially with my build, I was thrown around a bit," she said. "There were some massive wind gusts and I had to stay positive and keep the pressure on the pedals.

After a 2008 which included signing her first professional contract with Cervelo-Test team in addition to competing in her first road World Championships, the 23-year-old also sealed a spot at the 2009 World Championships with her win.

When I won in 2007, I was with the QAS (Queensland Academy of Sport), so I didnt get to wear the green and gold jersey very much, but now with Cervelo, it will be awesome to wear it on my skinsuit all year," said Ryan who will race around the world as a professional this year.

"I'm happy with how I rode but to come second by such a small margin kind of hurts a bit," said Rhodes. "Full credit to Carla she rode awesome and she was a better bike rider on the day."

West Australian Josephine Tomic won the Under 23 title ahead of Queenslands Shara Gillow, with another West Australian Sarah Kent in third.

Tomic only arrived in Ballarat at midnight last night after racing the five day Jayco Bay Criterium Series, the 2007 triple junior World Champion posted a time of 42:56.14 on her first ever ride of the challenging Mt Buninyong course.

I am quite happy just coming off the Bay crits as Sarah (Kent) and I are quite tired, Tomic said. I didn't actually mind the hill and I think I saved myself too much thinking it was going to be even more hilly.

"At least I know for next year.

Queenslands Gillow, daughter of Moscow Olympian David, finished just over three seconds behind Tomic (42:59.84).

I like time trialling and I like hills, so I am pretty stoked. Gillows said.

My goal was just to get my name up there and on the podium, so I am happy, said Kent.

Former rowers Amber Halliday and Sally Robbins also lined up today with three time world rowing champion, Halliday, impressing on debut. The South Australia finished fourth in a time of 41:36.76 only two seconds off the bronze medal.

"She's a champion, she's the best physiological specimen I've seen since 1992 (Kathy Watt)," said South Australian Institute of Sport Coach, Gary West, of Halliday who was lining up in her first cycling race on the back of eight weeks training.

Meantime Robbins finished well down the field in 22nd place with her time of 47:04.58.

"It's a really good change, a good break mentally and I'm enjoying the experience and enjoying being here," said Robbins who will also contest the road race on Saturday.

Vicki Whitelaw, one of the pre-race favourites, was on track for a podium finish before a puncture put paid to her medal hopes. She ended up in fifth place in a time of 42:40.00.

Earlier in the day Beijing Olympian Jack Bobridge, 19, (SA - Team AIS) continued his campaign of victories this time on the road with the gold medal in the Mars Australia U23 men's time trial.

It was a trifecta for Team AIS with West Australian Travis Meyer finishing just over six seconds slower for the silver medal (36:10.30), with Canberras Michael Matthews close behind in third place (36:10.95).

I am quite stoked to get my first U23 individual Australian championship and I think this could be the start of bigger and better things on the road, said Bobridge.

Despite only having seen the course for the first time yesterday, Bobridge averaged 46.60km/hour across the tough Mt Buninyong course, to finish with an impressive time of 36min03.1sec.

I knew the hill was pretty important to attack early on the climb and as I felt quite good up the hill, I hit it pretty hard," he said. "After that, I just tried to get a good tempo in the tail wind to hold onto it to the end and I just kept getting riders in sight on tough parts of the course and kept chipping away at it.

A member of the mens team pursuit that finished fourth at the Beijing Olympics, Bobridge was determined to make his mark on the road today following weeks of time trial preparation.

I put expectations pretty high on myself today and I knew I was a good chance, but knew every other rider here and knew I couldn't rule anyone else out."

Meyer went one better than last years third place and praised his younger team mate.

To get beaten by a guy like Jack is not a bad effort, the 20-year-old said adding, If you are going to win the national titles in the under 23 you have to have an exceptional ride and I did that, but Jack was the stronger rider on the day.

Matthews, 18, was ecstatic after claiming his first U23 podium finish.

To be that close to both of those guys is amazing because in under 19s when I raced them, they beat me by about a minute and a half, Matthews said.

Team AIS will now switch focus to Saturdays with hill climber Adam Semple joining the trio for the road race.

We have all come here with great form and it is always good to see your team mates up along side of you. I think that we will all be looking forward to Saturdays road race, said Bobridge.

The Championships are being staged at Buninyong, near Ballarat in Victoria, from 7 to 11 January. Further information about the race routes and to download entry lists please go to the event website aorcc.com