



Australian Open Road Championships

7 - 11 January 2009 BALLARAT

Media Release



10 January 2009

RYAN AND BOBRIDGE CLEAN UP IN BUNINYONG

Queenslands Carla Ryan and South Australia's Jack Bobridge have each collected their second gold medal of the week adding road race victories today to their time trial wins at the Scody Australian Open Road Championships in Buninyong, near Ballarat.

Ryan sailed across the line solo after launching her decisive attack on the final climb up Mt Buninyong on the tenth and final lap of the 102 kilometre race in which 69 riders started and 30 finished.

The 23-year-old crossed the finish line in 3hr3min37sec, 40 seconds ahead of fellow Queenslanders Ruth Corset and Nikki Butterfield (nee Egyed) who crossed for the minor placings.

To be honest, I had kind of been a bit nervous today and didnt know what to expect," said Ryan. "Today I felt really strong and the other girls were tiring and I had to make my move and back myself really.

Ryan is a former long distance runner who began cycling in 2005 through a Queensland Academy of Sport Talent ID program and this year will ride as a professional with the Cervelo Test Team.

Numerous breakaway attempts were quashed in the early stages of the ten lap event before the first significant move of the race on the lap seven that saw time trial silver medallist Alexis Rhodes rider clear of the peloton. She gained an advantage of almost a minute before she was caught that was when Ryan launched hr first attack.

She was joined by Corset, Butterfield, Canberras Vicki Whitelaw and Great Britains Beijing Olympian Sharon Laws, and shortly after, Ryan tried and failed with another breakaway attempt.

The leading five had a narrow margin on the bunch at the bell but were caught soon after. But when the race hit the climb up Mt Buninyong for the final time it was a case of third time lucky for Ryan who found no-one with her as she headed for home.

When I (first) attacked, they came back, (but) I felt confident and strong that I could have another go on the next lap, said Ryan. I knew I was riding strong from the time trial."

Butterfield, the silver medallist two years ago, also contested the womens road race the 2008 World Championships in Varese, Italy last September.

I think I rode better in the worlds in Varese but I am happy with this result and looking forward to the rest of the season, said Butterfield. Carla really deserves it and it is good to see a Queenslander on the top step of the dais,

Having only entered cycling three years ago, former triathlete Corset who rides with US based team Jazz-Apple was surprised by her silver medal.

I have worked hard for it and cant wait to go back and tell my family, said the 31-year-old mother of two. I would like to go to the worlds this year and maybe even the Commonwealth Games, but I am taking it one step at a time.

After finishing fourth in Wednesdays time trial, three time rowing World Champion Amber Halliday continued to impress at her debut Championships putting in a solid block of work on the front during the race before fading to 19th place at the finish.

I just wanted to have a go and test myself out and stay out of trouble and I found the best way to do that was to stay on front of the peloton and help out my team mates, said the 29-year-old.

Earlier in the day South Australias Jack Bobridge (Team AIS) won his second gold medal of the week in dramatic fashion after recovering from a fall midway through the 122.4km (12 laps) U23 Mens Road Race.

Bobridge, who won Wednesdays time trial, sprinted clear of his three breakaway companions to claim the win in a time of 3hr12min48sec.

Bobridges team mate and time trial bronze medallist, Michael Matthews, and Victorias Mark OBrien (Drapac-Porsche) tied in a dead heat for second place while Tasmanian Nathan Earle (Praties) was fourth.

For Bobridge the win caps off a phenomenal six months that saw him debut at the Olympic Games in his first year out of junior ranks. In Beijing he was a member of the pursuit team that finished fourth. In November he lined up for the Oceania Track Championships in November for a win in the individual pursuit. At the Track World Cup in Melbourne later the same month he claimed gold medals in both the individual and team pursuit event and has now added a road double to his already impressive resume.

I have been waiting for this, said Bobridge. To come out and get two on the road shows that Ive still got the ability to ride the road as well as the track.

Almost 100 riders began the race in warm conditions and despite an early break away of six riders, the race favourites remained in the peloton for the majority of the race.

At the halfway mark, a solo chase by Matthews saw him catch the lead group, however they were absorbed by the main peloton shortly after.

A clash of wheels at the feed station on the eighth lap left nineteen year old Bobridge on the ground but kept his cool and rejoined the race.

It was a bit of my fault and as well as maybe some others, it was a bit of a rush to get a drink bottle and I clipped a back wheel and had a bit of a spill, said Bobridge. Luckily it wasn't too bad and I had to chase for a bit, but I managed to get on and recover and I think the adrenalin kicked in after that

With three laps to go, Matthews attacked at the front and was joined by Bobridge, O'Brien and Earle and the quartet powered ahead to cement their lead on numerous groups of chasing riders.

Although just missing the win on the line, Matthews, 18, who was the 2008 Australian Junior Male Road Cyclist of the Year, was happy to claim his second medal in his debut season in the under 23 category.

It was not what I was expecting, but (I) was hoping for and I still can't believe it, said Matthews. I didn't feel very good at the start, but after I attacked and rode across to the break I felt I got better from there.

(Next year) I will hopefully do what (Jack) Bobridge has done this year and get two gold medals.

After finishing with bronze in the same event last year, O'Brien gained some consolation from his shared silver medal.

I am really happy with this as I have trained probably the hardest I have (ever trained) for an event to get here so pretty disappointed not to get the actual win, said the 21-year-old. But at the end of the day, I just couldn't get rid of them up the climb.

I gave it my all but Jack had too much and it wasn't good enough, so I have to be happy with second.

Within the elite women's race an U23 women's division was decided with Victoria's Peta Mullens narrowly edging out West Australia's Sarah Kent and South Australia's Tiffany Cromwell across the line.

I am a little bit surprised I didn't think I would have the endurance to last the day, I didn't really have the kilometres in my legs that I would have liked, but I guess I should have more confidence in myself said 20-year-old Mullens. This is my first road gold medal, I have one from the track, so no one really understands just how much this means to me.

Kent added to her bronze in Wednesday's time trial with a second medal of the Championships this time silver.

This is a huge result for me, I dont usually consider myself a road rider, so its pretty unbelievable, said Kent.

I am happy with any sort of medal, it was a tough day out there, and such a quality field, I just could not get rid of anyone out there, said Cromwell.

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