

#### **PAK'nSAVE Summer Road Series Event 4: Village Café Martinborough-Millars Circuit**

A calm overcast day greeted 90 riders as they lined up for Event Four of the PAK'nSAVE Summer Road Series – the Village Café Martinborough-Millars Circuit. Grand Fondo riders would do two laps of the 50km circuit and the Medio Fondo riders, one. With only one main climb up Millars Road and plenty of rollers, this was a course for strong riders.

After the neutral rollout from the Martinborough town square, it didn't take long for the action to heat up. After a few flurries on the first of many rollers, Matt Webb-Smith rolled off the front at the 16km mark. He was soon joined by Brent Backhouse and Craig Chambers. Dave Rowlands, Brendon McGrath, and Antony Nalder bridged across soon after to form the decisive break of the day. With most of the big hitters in the break there didn't appear to be much impetus in the peloton to chase.

The break worked well together and by the half way mark held a five minute lead. Chambers, unable to maintain the pace that was being set, dropped off the break 5km into second lap. He was soon absorbed back into the peloton. The peloton was more or less intact as it headed towards the base of the Millars Road climb. With Rivet Racing driving the pace towards the climb the peloton was soon stretched out single file. The fast pace up the climb required a concerted effort from a few stragglers to chase back on the descent.

Meanwhile, the remaining five in the break had stayed together over the climb. In the run home Rowlands and Backhouse managed to get away, and stay away, from the remaining three. Rowlands took the victory ahead of Backhouse. Nalder completed the podium for Meo GP taking third place ahead of McGrath and Webb-Smith. Despite a few forays off the front in the final kilometres the peloton lined up for the sprint. Tighe Nutsford (also of Meo GP) took the bunch sprint. Rachel Cunningham and Viv Collier of the Onslow Tarbabies led in the woman. Holly Barclay took a well-earned third place.

45 riders rolled out in the Medio Fondo Event. Once the flag dropped the group accelerated riding a solid tempo through to the first rise. U19 rider Freddie Dossor drove a strung out bunch up the first incline. This saw the peloton split into two distinctive groups.

Every roller saw the front group strung out. Despite the repeated efforts of Peter Wilkinson and Graeme Hawkins the front group stayed intact. Rolling into Millars the bunch hesitated and Ian Riddle launched himself into the false flat, chased by young Stanley Riddle. The bunch responded led by Gavin Cho and Wilkinson dragging them back. 50m from the summit Glenn Owen launched an attack and crested the top closely followed by Cho and Wilkinson. This tempo forced a split with many riders unable to close the gap.

There were many attempts from the front to get away in the run to the finish. James Cumming put in an impressive 5km solo drive before being chased down. A final attempt on the last roller 5km from home failed to stick and the remaining riders lined up for a chaotic sprint for the line. Greg Cundy was able to out sprint Wilkinson (second) and Mark Coburn (third) for his second win of the series. U19 rider Bridget Olphert led in the woman followed by Zoe Perry (U19) and Sophie Bright (20-34).

There were lots of smiles at the finish and many "if only" moments being relived as riders contemplated the decisive moments.

The Onslow Tarbabies (OTB) maintained their lead in the team's events with 841 points. Meo GP with its top placings in the Grand Fondo is slowly clawing back the OTB's advantage with 707 points. Bayleys Racing has 544 points followed by Rivet Racing on 321 points.

We're looking forward to seeing you all at the final event of the series, the Cossie Club Tour de Hutt, on 5 May. Registration is at the Upper Hutt Cossie Club from 8.30 to 9.30am. Event starts will be around 10am. Join us afterwards for some light refreshments and the final prize giving.

PNP is also running the gruelling Runner vs MTB vs Road event – Hawkins Hill Challenge – on 14 April. To find out more go to [pnp.org.nz/hawkins-hill-challenge](http://pnp.org.nz/hawkins-hill-challenge) and register online today!