

RACE REPORT WINNERS EDGE NATIONAL MTB CHAMPS

Ferry Reach Park held the 2009 National champs in mountain biking on Sunday. The race was scheduled to run the longest course ever devised in the park and over the longest distance.

This event saw many riders from the season's category B point's championship move up to compete in the Male A category.

At just after 9am the A cat men were off and points champion Neil de ste Croix stormed to the front, however his normal guns blazing speed was tempered with the fact that the race was over 8 laps and therefore would last at least ninety minutes, and all out speed would have to be tempered with some endurance and mechanical sympathy. Behind de ste Croix slotted the field with Dave Collins a racer from the B group proving his worth in second. At the first major obstacle, a tricky section over a broken wall Mark Hatherley fell and the field got split. Garth Thompson the pre race favorite could not be stopped however riding over Hatherley and into third.

The race joined the railway trail and the second group of riders worked hard to rejoin the lead bunch and did so by the end of the next climb. Soon after Thompson made his move and burst up the inside of the group on a climb and began to open his legs creating an instant gap.

At the end of lap one the leaders were separated by seconds and the running order was Thompson, de ste Croix, Hatherley, Collins, Phillips, Goudge, Dunne, Jacks and Amaral. Phil Trussell carrying an injury retired at this point. On lap two at that same obstacle that took Hatherley on lap one Freddie Phillips tumbled. This allowed the top three to pull a larger gap that was not instantly closed as in lap one. De ste Croix and Hatherley were swapping places regularly as the Winners Edge rider threw his chain on the climbs then having to work hard to regain lost spots. Freddie Phillips led Bicycle Works Grant Goudge for a lap before Goudge span past but soon after Goudge started to suffer retiring on lap four. Peter Dunne was having his ride of the season gapping his closest competition and gaining on Collins his early pace had taken its toll.

A close battle for seventh saw Paul Jacks hold off Jeff Amaral for four and a half laps but on the a steep climb around a water tower before the finish line Amaral took the opportunity to pass and this signaled the end for Jacks who retired shortly after. Peter Dunne continued to show great determination and on the penultimate lap overtook Collins who was dreaming of the checkered flag.

Thompson proved uncatchable and stormed home to the National title for the second year running. Mark Hatherley was runner up after a late season improvement in fitness a disappointed de ste Croix took third.

The men's B group was down on numbers due to the season's top riders deciding to move up in class. This group would ride seven laps of the grueling course. Scott Mello was the early leader but was under pressure from Charles Dunstan on the climbs and then opening his lead again on the way down. Ed Jordan suffered the first mechanical failure losing his chain early on, and retiring.

Mello and Dunstan swapped the lead several times before Dunstan's superior fitness began to tell and he opened up a lead. Alex Godfey was safe in third but was not having the race he had hoped for and looked to be suffering. Philandro Hill was another victim to the flying chain syndrome, his breaking at the farthest point from the finish line ensuring a long walk for repairs.

Rickai Lightbourne took fourth place holding off Hill once he had rejoined. So it was Dunstan who took the win Mello runner up.

Women's A saw defending champ Kim Naude ride to a comfortable victory runner up Sara Bonnett was unrecognizable from the lady that started the season in both technical ability and fitness and the Team Madison rider will prove stiffer competition next season.

In female under 12 Courtney Day showed her retired racing father how it's done taking victory from Jessie Godfrey.

Boys under 12 went to form with brothers from Bicycle Works Daniel and Christian Oatley continuing their dominance for first and second. Ryan Day taking third.

The day's other winners were. Elizabeth Jordan female 13-16. Sarah Jordan female B. Mark Godfrey male 13-16.