



Eastern veterans cycling club

Respecting the Rights of all Road Users

Newsletter August 8th 2009

Graded Scratch Races – Casey Fields – August 1st

Race report

It was Casey Fields.

Those coming from the west anticipated a pleasant afternoon's racing, those from the north (those who did venture past the end of their driveway) expected a wet encounter. Neither anticipation nor expectation were fully met. The wind was there, the rain came, the rain went, the wind hung around. The track dried enough before racing commenced to throw no tails and the rain stayed away till after presentations were completed. Such was the way it was for the sixty-one riders as they headed into a stiff westerly, the top riders seeing their respective brands of cycle-computers displaying speeds ranging from the high 20s to the low 50s depending on the orientation of the top-tube.

a-grade (1:20)

Phil Smith isn't the tallest member in the club and nobody would say he suffers from SMS but he appeared to have something to prove, taking off on the second lap and leaving his seven grade-mates to battle the conditions alone. It took a couple of laps for the remainder to get themselves organised, Nigel's suggestions that the group work together had them asking the question; "who fell off and made you captain?". And a couple more laps before Phil conceded that he wasn't going to be allowed to stay away and returned to the bunch.

A couple more laps and Phil was away again, this time spending a couple of laps on his own, attempts by a few in the bunch to bridge reducing Phil's lead but prolonging his solitude as the pace surged and then ebbed. The end of Phil's solitude didn't see the end of his efforts and he again found himself clear with around half an hour on the clock. This break short lived but by no means his last. His next effort attracted the attention of Trevor Coulter and the pair spent a couple of laps trying to build a break, to no avail.

In between Phil's sojourns others were punishing the group and at fifty minutes a gap appeared at fifth wheel as Rob Amos and David Holt applied the pressure. Nigel, digging deep to make up the ground he'd let go, closed it to a couple of bike lengths before his followers built the bridge around him. All back together again. But not for long.

An inappropriate introduction between Stuart Bendall's front wheel and Phil Thompson's rear wheel saw the bunch captain meet the bitumen, Justin Davis going down as well.

Unfortunately Stuart was unable to continue, Phil and Justin taking a lap out to pick themselves and Stuart up before rejoining the race. The bunch enjoying a quiet lap to allow the fallen time to dust themselves off before rejoining.

With very little sand left in the hourglass Phil made a final bid for freedom, jumping as the race turned away from the wind and into the finish straight, only to be greeted by the bell which took the wind from his sails. The pace coming right off as it became obvious it was going to be position, position, position that was going to decide the race.

Halfway through the lap, as the road turned into the wind along the serpentine straight, Nigel climbed out of the saddle and put the hurt into everybody's legs. Nigel hoping that the initial surprise would catch the others by surprise and that there'd be a delay in reacting to the bold move. It may have achieved the objective but the wind and tiring legs allowed all but one to scramble across by the start of the last downwind stretch. Phil Smith finally joining the line half way along the final straight as Nigel drifted off the back.

From his vantage point at l'arrière du peloton Nigel watched as Rob Amos started the sprint going into the final turn. With David Holt and Justin Davis on either side it became a run for the line, a manno a manno a manno. Trevor Coulter and Phil Thompson trying to get close enough to catch a bit of respite from the wind to make a final lunge whilst Phil Smith surrendered to the sprinter's legs. Phil and Trevor never finding the shelter they desired. David proving the stronger of the lead three greeted the chequered flag first, Justin just pipping Rob before the line took second while Rob had a little breathing space before Trevor and Phil T. followed him across the finish.

Figures for the race; 1:23:52 to cover 51.59k for an average of 36.9kph.

b-grade (1:15)

Nigel Letty's race.

Twice on the way to the race on Saturday afternoon I went to turn around and go home. The weather in Lysterfield looking to the north was bleak and Mt Dandenong had disappeared in mist. The thought of racing around Casey in a blustery wind and rain certainly knocked around the enthusiasm down. Approaching Casey Fields I couldn't believe that there was a small opening to show a blue sky with sunshine on the track. Maybe it wasn't going to be as bleak as expected after all!

At the entry desk I commented to JP (John Pritchard - ed.) that I had tried to ring him twice to get an update on the weather to which he replied "lucky you didn't get through, I would have told you to go home!"

The race started with a strong commitment from everyone that it was going to be no picnic and attacks up the road were short lived until Ian Smith got off the front for a couple of laps. Attempts to break and give him a hand only dragged the bunch up and I think Ian was relieved when the bunch came back together. Determined to go home having given myself a hard workout, I took the opportunity to bridge a gap of around a 100 meters to help an attempt from Rob Harris to break away. Soon after joining him I was asked "do you want to do turns?" I responded with "of course" and we then put the hammer down the best we could with a head wind resisting with equal determination. After three and a half laps I could see that we didn't have the grunt to maintain our break, we really needed at least one, but maybe two, more to have a chance of success.... Unless you're Frank Nyhuis! Once Rob and I were caught (apparently Rob Truscott keeping the pressure on) Frank took off and slowly but surely increased the gap even though there were some solid attempts to reduce it. I've seen Frank on the Power Output Positioning system at Dandenong (Bicycle Super Store - go on Nigel, plug your shop - ed.) and know he puts out a lot of power but with the wind the way it was, I was surprised at how easy he made it look.

The bunch sprint saw many nervously taking off early trying to avoid the final turn into the head wind finish but JP timed it to perfection, winning the sprint with Rob Harris coming through for a well earned 3rd place.

The weather behaved magnificently with rain just starting to fall as I finished a well earned Cascade stout before wandering off to my car to head home.

Thanks to the B Grade participants for a great race!

Frank's perspective

It was pretty windy on Saturday, so I was determined not to overcook myself early in the race like I usually do, wasting energy on fruitless breakaway attempts, or chasing down other fruitless breakaway attempts, because then I have nothing left for the last 200m. So I sat down the back for the first 15-20 minutes and watched other people try and get away, struggle in the massive headwind on the curvy section down the back, and also along the straight in front of the registration desk.

The first 3 or 4 laps got everyone warmed up, and after a couple of small attempts at freedom by John Pritchard (who was eerily silent without his carbon wheels), Ben Schofield and Ian Smith, Nigel Letty and Rob Harris tried something a bit more serious, and pulled out a 200m gap with no-one from the peleton keen to take up the chase. Anthony Gullace then thought he'd try and bridge, but the wind took its toll and after a lap and a half he was no help to the escapees, and getting no help from the bunch, because he was in between the two. I tried with one other to bridge to Anthony, but everyone else caught on, caught up, and then we were back to chasing Nigel

and Rob, who looked to be slowing up just a little after a few laps on their own. Of course, once you feel like you're catching up, you all try just a little bit harder to put them out of their misery and the two outriders were brought back to the bunch very quickly once they realised they were doomed, and decided to save their energy for later in the race. John Pritchard and Rob Harris tried a couple more times, and at one stage Ben Schofield and I bridged to Rob, but he was a bit tired from his earlier effort, and the bunch didn't let us get very far before catching our wheels once again.

At the 50 minute mark, I took off from midfield in the back windward section, and stayed out of my seat until I was almost at the U-turn. When I looked around, there was no-one on my wheel, and the bunch was still struggling in the last section of headwind, so I put in another big effort as soon as I got to the downhill tailwind and opened up a good gap for myself. I figured if I could keep my rhythm and cadence up into the wind, and pushed a big gear with the tailwind, I had a chance to beat the pack if they couldn't work out who in the group was going to start chasing. I knew it would be a grind, but at least I knew what I had to do to stay away, and as I watched the gap grow a little bit each lap (I was also judging my speed against the a-grade bunch) I could see that the 200-300m gap would be enough to save myself from having to sprint if I could maintain that till I got the bell. As I came to the finish line, my clock was showing 1hr 14min., and thankfully the officials on the line felt sorry for me and rang the bell. I put in a bit of an effort into the wind to avoid any nasty surprises on the line, and was happy to get over with the bunch still to get to the bottom corner. As they came to the line, John Pritchard was clear in second, and Rob Harris leading the rest of the bunch in third place.

c-grade (1:10)

Ideal conditions for racing they weren't, half the bunch wishing they'd not stepped out the front door. With an hour and ten minutes promised, strong winds and thirteen others to chase you down if you decided to have a go, nobody really had a go.

As per usual a major portion of the pace setting was divvied up between Richard Dobson and Neil Cartledge, most others coming to the front at some stage to help out only to remember why it was they'd been sheltering behind a wheel or two. The odd set of fresh legs at the front keeping heart rates high as the pace would surge up, especially along the downwind stretches, before returning to the previous levels as the wind kicked in.

Despite a solid pace, and the unfavourable conditions, Dave Worland took to powering up the bunch along the downwind stretch instilling fear in the group and raising the tempo until the race headed up the finish straight where Dave would ease off. As Dave sat back Dale Goodall or David McCormack (team BSS - ed.) would take over, hitting the bunch and causing them to again have to respond if they wanted to stay in the race.

Despite the antics of the three Ds, and as was to be expected, the bunch stayed together for the duration. On the bell the gas got turned back a notch as most started to think about, and look for, the ideal wheel to sit for the, preordained, inevitable sprint. As to be expected it came down to those who had preserved their

strength the best. Dale Goodall started the sprint from a long way out, Tony Curulli and David McCormack stuck to his wheel, the remainder scrabbling for the wheel in front in an effort to stay in contention. Dale kept the hammer down which had the bunch stretched into a long fragmented line. By the time it hit the headwind stretch it was two trains and a few discarded carriages. Peter Shanahan the caboose on the second and looking for a way to the first, Dave Worland providing the means, Pete using the wheel to get within bridging distance by the final loop. Downwind Peter made the juncture and by the last corner only half the bunch remained in contention and some of those were just making up the numbers.

Into the last corner David McCormack stepped it up a notch and passed Tony and Dale to take the lead into the run up to the finish. Jim Swainston responded to take the lead and it became a drag race to the line. David, responding to Jim's response, regained the lead. Jim, having no response, allowed David to hold the lead to the line, Jim crossing for second in his shadow. Peter Shanahan used the lead out of the remainder to the best advantage to finish third.

Club Clothing

A range of clothing is available for sale and usually available from Kevin Starr at the races on Saturday. Check out the website (www.easternvets.com/clothing.php) for the full range of clothing.

d-grade (1:05)

No report.

e/f-grade (1:00)

Fun wouldn't have been a description used by many but it was bandied about by one tough nut in the e-grade race, a race that

started in a fairly lethargic fashion. The bunch riding in formation for three laps before the conversation finally got to one amongst the group and he was off, and the social ride was over - racing was under way.

The attack didn't last long but it shook the lethargy from the legs and wheels were watched and shoulders studied. A half-dozen laps into the race Michael Paulli decided he could handle the conditions and put the head down, heading up the road with one other in tow.

A couple of laps later even the shelter of big Michael wasn't enough for his companion, the two parting ways, Michael pushing on to threaten the bunch with the possibility of being lapped before the race was over. In an effort to avoid the humiliation Geoff Cranstone set about chasing, three others joining in, a pair of Wilsons and one other (not a Spalding though), Brian Farrell just missing the boat.

With the chasing foursome swapping turns Brian was left to watch as it steadily drew away, then along came Charles Lethbridge, the pair doing their best to rejoin the race but two against four against the wind was too much. Charles eventually succumbing to the pressure leaving just Brian to beat his head against the wind in an effort to catch the chase - not to be.

Michael, never threatened, won comfortably.

The bell saw the chase give up, assured in the ken that they weren't going to be lapped, the ease in pace enough to allow Brian to catch up. Brian, having used both the d & c grade bunches and a short cut to get close enough to his fellow blood-nuts, voluntarily disqualifying himself as the race passed the rooms to leave the four to draw straws for the last lead out. JC Wilson, using all his experience and wile to avoid the short straw, was able to show off his sprinting prowess, finishing strongly ahead of his new brother - Roger, the other two left to consider what may have been.

Results

	First	Second	Third
a-grade (8)	David Holt	Justin Davis	Rob Amos
b-grade (15)	Frank Nyhuis	John Pritchard	Rob Harris
c-grade (14)	David McCormack	Jim Swainston	Peter Shanahan
d-grade (13)	Dean Machell	Mick Paull	Graeme Parker
e/f-grade (11)	Michael Paulli	JC Wilson	Roger Wilson

Officials

Thanks to Graeme Parker and Ron Stranks who were on the desk taking entries. Thanks to Deb Chambers who was in charge of proceedings on the day and ably assisted by Mark Swoboda, Matthew Robinson and Peter Grey. Also thanks to Richard Dobson who manages the duty roster and ensures we have enough people on the day for our races, to JC Wilson who brings the trailer to all our races and Peter Mackie with the drinks.

Note : Members rostered for marshal or traffic control duties must be at the circuit at least one hour before the scheduled start time. (but bring your bike, you just never know)

Eastern Vets Program

Saturday	August	8	2:00pm	Casey Fields	Graded Scratch Races
Saturday	August	15	2:00pm	METEC	Graded Scratch Races
Saturday	August	22	2:00pm	Yarra Junction	Croydon Cycleworks / Jack Thompson memorial handicap
Saturday	August	29	2:00pm	Halls Gap	Graded Scratch Races
Sunday	August	30	10:00am	Halls Gap	VVCC Open handicap
Monday	August	31	8:00pm	Maroondah Club	General Meeting
Wednesday			10:00am	The Loop – Yarra Boulevard	Scratch Races + post race coffee

Note : Graded Scratch Race entries are accepted on the day up to 15 minutes before the advertised race start time.

* Handicap entries close the Tuesday before the race. Riders entering a handicap **MUST** pay the entry fee regardless of participation. Fees are due on race day, entrants will **NOT** be allowed to start in any EVCC race until fees have been paid.

No late entries will be accepted for either scratch races or handicaps. Entries to handicaps can be submitted via e-mail to the handicapper or on any race day prior to the event.

Northern Vets Program

Sunday	August	9	10:00am	Avenal Rd, Seymour	General Memorial Handicap (64k)
Sunday	August	16	9:30am	National Boulevard	Graded Scratch Races
Sunday	August	23	10:00am	Lancefield	Club Championships
Sunday	August	30	9:30am	National Boulevard	Graded Scratch Races

Gippsland Vets Program

Sunday	August	23	10:00am	Kernot (Melways 627 K8)	46k scratch races
Sunday	September	6	10:00am	Kernot (Melways 627 K8)	46k scratch races

Victorian Veterans Cycling Council Program

Sunday	Aug	16		Woodstock	VVCC Road Championships	10/8 - \$15
Sunday	Aug	30	2:00pm 10:00am	Halls Gap	Grampians Scratch Race Grampians Open – Handicap	24/8 - \$10 24/8 - \$15

Note : Entries are to be on the appropriate VVCC Open entry form (available on VVCC website) and are to be accompanied by the requisite fee.

Other Results, etc.:

For your calendar

Date	Location	Event
29-30/8/2009	Halls Gap	A great weekend of dining, socializing and cycling. - Graded Scratch race - 2:00pm 29/8 - VVCC Open handicap - 10:00am 30/8 Entries for both races are to be submitted to the VVCC on an official entry form. Details on the club's activities and accommodation for the weekend are available from Ian Smith
13/9/2009	Shepparton	Fruitloop ride, 50, 100 & 200k ride options. \$90.00 registration - www.fruitloopshepparton.com/fruitloopride/
13/9/2009	Whittlesea	DeGani Kinglake ride, 120k - \$130, 70k - \$105 - www.supersprint.com.au/events/degani-kinglake-ride-2009.aspx
18/10/2009	Melbourne	Around the Bay in a Day.
7/3/2010	Falls Creek	BV - Alpine attack, 230k. Registrations open 1/9/2009 - \$150 - www.bv.com.au/great-rides/42359

Friends of Eastern

She may not be of 'veterans' age but regular Sunday morning rider Fran Wellington is considered an honorary (albeit junior) member and she is about to set off on a fund raising ride from Melbourne to Uluru.

On August 30, Fran will be departing from Federation Square with nine fellow cyclists (including Eastern's own web-master - Craig Everard) for Uluru. The primary purpose of this trip is to raise much needed funds for the Cancer Council, to allow them to provide essential services to cancer patients and their families. The group is aiming to complete the 2317km trip in just 13 days, averaging about 180km a day.

Members interested in supporting Fran (and/or Craig) in her fund-raising efforts can do so at the official 2009 Melbourne to Ayers Rock Cycling Challenge web site; www.rideforcancer.com.au

Gran Fondo, Gran Fondo, Gran Fondo;

A couple of our members are overseas at the moment; Nigel Frayne having just competed in the ICF World Championships and Tony Chandler is over there for the UCI World Masters Championships later this month. As a part of his lead up Tony has just competed in the Giro Delle Dolomiti, as it suggests a circuit of the Dolomites in Italy. This is a timed six-stage event and Tony acquitted himself well finishing 59th on GC (out of 700 starters) and 8th in his age group. Although the event is open to all comers this is a serious event attracting a half-score teams from various quarters of Europe.

The race comprises six stages of 120-150k with solid climbs on all days, three days racing, a day off and then the final three days. Tony lost around three minutes to the age group leader on the first two days and then limited it to around one and a half minutes on the remaining four stages. On the rest day Tony was sitting 14th in his age group but managed to claw back more than five minutes on riders ahead to be chasing seventh place on the last day. Unfortunately the hills proved too steep (15%) making up only a minute of the two he needed to take the place.

Good effort Tony and good luck in Deutschlandsberg and St Johann.

Nigel Frayne's ICF World Championship bid;

Oh goodie! It's Sunday and time for the big race at last. So why is it raining? 4 weeks of endless riding in the sun had to end sometime I guess but did it have to be today? It's bucketing down. The day before we had driven out to recce the course in bright sunshine. It's flat as a pancake up there in Flanders and the course is layers of concrete, tarmac and paved brick sections through both rural and suburban streets. A typical setting as found throughout northern Belgium.

So in the pack go the shoe covers a rain coat and peak cap not to mention a pocket full of extra trepidation. Getting my buns whipped last Wednesday was still fresh in the mind so I went with the extra padded bibs this time :-)

The streets were deserted as we drove north to Aartselaar. The smart people were home tucked up in bed. But not the organisers of this festival of speed. As we approached the course already roads were blocked off and police cars were clearing the course. The even older than us crustys (60+) were already out there ready to race.

We parked the car and walked in to the village for the sign on. Why didn't we just drive there rather than get soaked walking? Some kind of pointer to the bewildered state of mind I suspect. The town centre looks like a stage finish of the Tour de France! The organisation of this event is hugely impressive. Down the back of the pub I find the trestle tables with laptops and files and busy looking officials. I hand over my 12 Euro and receive my nice crisp numbers. No. 2!!!! What the? Hopefully no one sees this as a ranking. Then again, as I'm determined to show these soft Belgians the true meaning of the term Aussie Mongrel maybe a bit of visual intimidation is warranted. So I puff out my chest and a little air and swan off as if already donning the striped jersey. Chimp or Champ? We'll see.

Back to the car to find that last gel I've been saving for a rainy day (sic), pin on the numbers, prepare the steed, let all the air out of the tyres. Yep I know all the tricks these guys with their fancy Zips and Lightweight singles would never dream of. This is gonna be a bloodbath.

Oops is that the time. Race starts in 20 minutes. But I haven't done a warm up and it's still raining and I'm half way round the course and I was warned to be in the start chute early to avoid being dropped immediately the gate opens and they reach for their hammers. So I head straight for the start with just one brief stop to take a piss in a public place, this nice hedge looks exposed enough - I've noticed that this is how the locals do it, nice and open where everyone can check out your huge tackle :-)

By the time I get to the starting pen it has almost filled with my fellow lambs. So I'm down the back already. Good! More incentive for the slaughter that is about to take place!

Without fanfare or warning the front row is rolling out. I'm now moving as well but the damned left foot won't clip in. They're getting away! Clip! Ah good it's in and now I can start chasing. The heart rate goes from 65 to 165 in the blink of an eye as the speedo heads into the 40s. Up ahead they are bunching up for the first corner, a fairly tight right hander with nice brickwork inlay just in case it wasn't already slippery enough. As with the Wed crit earlier in the week the pattern was easy on the corners then accelerate down the straights. This is good for helping one stay on as we bunch up but then you have to stay connected as the elastic stretches out on the straights. After the 4th turn we get onto a long sweeping straight and new scenarios are starting to play in my mind. How can I get these legs to stop screaming in pain? I try clicking down to reduce the cadence. Yikes I'm on the 11 already! Speedo check 48.6, hmm this is all going to be over very soon. Just as I'm thinking this can't go on any more the next

corner arrives and I reach for the brakes. But instead of grinding to a halt I'm accelerating into the back of all these pro-racing types. This is going to be ugly. Luckily the water on the rims turns to a nice black paste and develops enough heat to pull me up and round I go. The rest from all the pulling has helped the legs to relax and the next stretch feels more comfortable. And so it goes on for 8km until we eventually return to the start/finish back in the town. 1 lap down 7 to go.

Next lap repeats the pattern and as I'm now well and truly warmed up I seem to be emerging from the twilight zone and discover conscious existence again. I think I am! One thing that hits me firmly in the face is water. Actually it's grit and grime and lord knows what else showering up from the 80+ wheels ahead. I try not to think about the size of the buttocks on the local cattle that I've noticed in the nearby fields and hope none of them have strayed on the roads recently. Just to be sure I spit out everything possible in between sucks on the bidon. The rain continues unabated and I'd swear I'm back in Hall's Gap only it's 20 degrees warmer.

Anyway back to the racing. With the brain now somewhat re-engaged I start to work on that masteplan. First up I've gotta get closer to the front. I spend the entire lap working this plan, sometimes it's leaving the braking later and sliding up the outside but one excursion onto the grassy verge warns about this strategy. So I try clicking into longer gears and squeeze out an extra kph on the straights. By the end of that lap I've managed to get forward into perhaps the top 20. Good! Now I can also see what's going on up there for the first time.

There are about 5 guys line astern before the arrow head branches out to 4 or 5 abreast where I am. However the first 4 corners come in fairly quick succession and that elastic band is becoming very contorted. By the time we reach that sweeper section again the line ahead is much longer and stretches single file to the horizon. Someone is pulling very hard. I hit my maximum speed on this section 51.6kph. The next sharp right hander is negotiated at speed, no bunching this time and clearly the hammer has gone down up front. Little by little I am drifting backwards but I'm desperately hanging onto wheels to survive. Surely this surge will end and I'll be able to get back on.

But doesn't happen. The guy two wheels ahead has lost contact and as he rolls off exhausted the next victim tries to get across. He dies too and now it's my turn. The bunch is just up there but try as I might I can't reach them. I glance back for some help but there's nothing but carnage back there. I continue on as best I can. Finally a couple of desperados swing by on my left and I make one last dig out of the saddle to hook on. But no amount of that legendary Aussie Mongrel can get me back on. As we roll back into the village to complete lap 3 the bunch has kicked on out of sight. Chimp!

3 laps, 24km, average speed 40.8kph max 51.6kph, average cadence 100 max 120! Hmm interesting. Is that racing on a compact crank or something about the 11-21T cassette?

Either way it's over and I slink back to the car to wring out the clothes and wipe off some of this black grime. The back of the course goes past the car park so I can keep an eye on the action. It is scary stuff to watch. If I had seen big bunches rolling through I would have been quite annoyed since surely I could have held my own in there. However, to my satisfaction, I saw groups of 4 chasing groups of 5 chasing groups of 6 and many more contorted faces line astern for lap after lap. Hmm, seems the real race started just about where I had left off. It's good to know that while I gave it my best effort there was no way I was going to survive in this company. These guys were awesome. World champions indeed!

By the time I had dried and changed then driven across to the finish line the boys were still out there completing their last lap. Hard to believe it could have still been going after all that time.

The final sprint was building and a guy had escaped off the front. Why was he looking back? Presumably he was totally cooked with 50m to go. He dug in for the line but was pipped by a TGV led by a brute of a man with legs that reminded me of one Sean Eadie!

For the second time the same Dutchman had taken the title and third place was won by the escapee who had just held on. I recognised him as the same rider who had won that C grade crit last Wed. form held up. Their time for the 67km was 1:37min which by my calculations means an average speed of somewhere about 44kph. Yikes!

Sadly the rain murdered the atmosphere and only a smattering of folks attended the podium. I took some pics so check out my website in a few days. Also the ICF have a site but so far the photos aren't showing. I'll let you know when they're up.

Thanks for reading the rave. Tomorrow I head home and back to the safety of my local racing club the better for the amazing experience of witnessing these incredible riders at close quarters.

A bientôt!
Nigel
