

16 April 2020

Eastern Cycling Club

Newsletter

Duty Roster

The duty roster is in abeyance while racing is suspended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are a month or so now into the shutdown of all racing – and of plenty more than just bike racing. The COVID-19 situation is constantly changing, and it is too soon to know when we might be able to resume normal life, including racing. A message from El Pres. Adam on the following pages will bring you up to date with club news and some developments in response to the virus. There's also a message for everyone from Pat Ruys further down.

In the absence of club racing, there is news in this issue from the AVCC National Championships, which were held in Adelaide during January. Special congratulations to Sue Sharples, Keith Wade and Stefan Kirsch, who were each awarded the Champions jersey in their age group as the rider with the best results across all three disciplines: criterium, road race and individual time trial. All three have written reports on their experience at the Nationals, and there's also a selection of photos inside. A trawl through the photos online revealed plenty of other Eastern members in action at the Nationals as well: we spotted Tony Dalton, Chris Ellenby, Paula McGovern, Russell Newnham, Kym Petersen, Steve Ross, Rob Suter, Pam Vandersluys – and there were probably others. Well done to all. The Nationals are scheduled to return to Adelaide in January 2021 to coincide once again with the Tour Down Under. Fingers crossed!

In the meantime, whether it's out of doors (but distanced) or indoors on the trainer, happy riding!

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From left to right, Sue Sharples, Keith Wade and Stefan Kirsch in their Champions jerseys from the AVCC National Championships in Adelaide. Scroll down to read their reports and see photos from the racing.





Message from the President

Greetings Members,

I hope you and your families are going OK during these difficult times.

I just wanted to give you a quick update on the last two meetings of the club committee.

We had the AGM in March. This year's committee is:

- Adam Dymond – President
- Susan Williams – Secretary
- Juanita Stumbles – Treasurer
- Max Michelson – Club Captain
- Peter Mackie – Handicapper
- Andrew Buchanan – Duty Roster Co-Ordinator
- Max Michelson – Trailer co-ordination and race day set-up.

New committee members are:

- Brendan Wain – Race permits and traffic management plans
- Dean Niclasen – Chair, Race Committee
- Dean Tune – Assistant Treasurer.

Please consider if you can help in the following positions, which are still vacant:

- Vice President
- Assistant Secretary
- Assistant Handicapper
- Vice Captain.

I'd like to thank Brendan, Dean N. and Dean T. and welcome them to the committee. It's great to have new blood coming in.

Also a big thanks to outgoing committee members Colin Mortley (Chair, Race Committee) and Peter Gray (trailer) for their long periods of passionate and dedicated service. You have both gone above and beyond for many years and ECC is truly indebted to you both.

Finally, a big shout out to Club Captain Max Michelson, who has been instrumental in enabling Peter and Colin to make the transition out of their roles, and in bringing in Brendan Wain, who has been helping for a few months now. Chapeau, Maxi.

The committee met for our monthly meeting on Wednesday 8 April via ZOOM and will continue to meet monthly to monitor status with the virus and to consider when we will be able to resume racing. Rest assured, your committee is keen to have ECC back racing as soon as we are given the all clear by the relevant authorities. In the meantime, your committee will focus on encouraging member engagement via a monthly newsletter and Facebook posts.

We are also looking at a club social ride on Zwift, so please keep an eye on your email inbox. I see a few members are doing a Zwift race together on Tuesday night; as well, Noel Said from NCC has





organised a social ride on Zwift for all VCV club members.

Maxi, PAM and I will be reaching out and checking in on all members aged over 65 in the next week or so. If any other member wants a chat at any time, please let Maxi, PAM or myself know.

I encourage all members to reach out to two or three fellow members – just check in, say g'day and ask each other how you are going with riding and training. Strava serves this purpose for many of us, but a phone call, a text message or an email can be valuable, too. Let's stick together and look out for each other.

Regards,
Adam

2020 AVCC National Championships, Adelaide, 18–20 January

Men 45–49

By Stefan Kirsch

With the 2020 Championships being held in Adelaide to coincide with the Tour Down Under, it was too good an opportunity not to take part. I have wanted to race the Nationals for ages, but the usual timing over Easter has meant other things have taken priority.

Criterium

It's always hard to know how to race these types of events when you don't know the opposition. Do you let a group go up the road or not? Often the race shuts down once a few riders are up the road, so the strategy was simple – be up the road in that break. My plan was to put the opposition under pressure, find a weak link and exploit it. I think six riders were up the road, and I was there, too, so in with a chance. In the end, I made a mistake and was out of position (under a wheel instead of behind) and I watched the winner get enough of a gap that I could not close it down. Still, I was happy with 2nd.

Road race

A tough circuit with lots of little sharp climbs, none of which were long enough to shed enough riders. It was a matter of who could

slip away and not be chased. I had a few goes but I could not get away. (Riders watch who races hard in the crit, and naturally think that is a good wheel to sit on, so often you become a prisoner of the bunch.) In the end, one rider slipped away and took a deserved win (he was out by himself for a long time). I finished 6th in the sprint, once again a little too far back. Same story as in the criterium: when you don't know the opposition, always react first, open the sprint when in range and don't wait for others to go first.

Time trial

A wet and windy affair. Now this was an interesting race. Cold, wet and windy, riding a TT bike with limited braking ability, a deep dish front wheel and a disc on the back ... I feel very alive when uncomfortable and scared! I got through the TT with a reasonable ride, finishing 3rd.

Happy to stay upright.

Women 60–64

By Sue Sharples

Today I received my jersey that I won for the AVCC Championships held back in January. I have to say, I was stoked!





The only reason I raced the event was that I was going to be in South Australia. I probably wouldn't have travelled that far, especially without having trained up for it.

I am so glad I did, it reminded me that it doesn't matter how old you are, you can still push yourself and get caught up in the emotion of it all. You meet like-minded people; you get to support, and are supported by, your fellow club mates. You also become a role model for your younger friends and family. (My grandchildren were so excited when I came in each day, wondering how I went and getting to wear my medals.)

There weren't many competitors in my age group but they were a lovely bunch of ladies and we all had fun. The courses were challenging, as was the weather on the final day, but we got there and enjoyed the hospitality of the host clubs each day.

Congratulations to all those who raced and thank you to all those who ran the events.

Men 74–79

By Keith Wade

Well, let me say up front, I should not have won this overall Champions award. The fact that I did is mainly due to the actions of others, and perhaps just a bit of sheer doggedness on my part, so here is my story.

I like Adelaide, I spent the first 26 years of my life living there so I know it well, and how hot it can get in January when the National Championships were scheduled. But I don't mind the heat, and when the news came out that the Nationals were to be held there during the TDU week, I jumped at the opportunity to enter even though it was my last year in my age group (74–79).

First event was the criterium, held on a purpose-built cycling track on what used to be the Victoria Park horseracing venue. Quite a

nifty little track it is, too – absolutely dead flat, about a kilometre around and with a rather sharp left-hander about 300–400 metres from the finish line. And, amazingly, the weather was what I call cold. Anyway, for me criteriums are criteriums, so I just hung in and stayed with the bunch to the finish, got caught a bit wide on that last bend and finished somewhere in the middle of the pack.

The next day was the road race, the event I particularly came for. Set in the more northerly of the Adelaide Hills near the town of Gumeracha, our race took an interesting 55 km course in the shape of a triangle, of which we did three laps. The first leg of the triangle included three quite steep climbs, and after that the course undulated downwards along the other two sides of the triangle until the end of the lap. The finish line was about 1 km up the first leg. The initial 500 metres or so of this was very steep (the first of the three climbs) after which it flattened out to the line. All looked good to me, though the weather was still quite cold with the occasional shower.

From the start in Gumeracha, we had about 6 km of neutral up to the finish line – well, it should have been neutral, but a couple of youngsters in the bunch set off at a cracking pace. Eventually they were forced to slow down by the others who took it more steadily.

Nevertheless, the pace went on again on the first climb, and by the time we reached the second hill, the field had splintered. Three guys took off on that second and longest of the climbs, and I was in the second bunch of three. We never saw the leaders again, nor those behind. So two of us, Bill Mackay and myself, shared most of the work around that first lap. I didn't get the name of the other guy, who did a good turn towards the end of that first lap and then said bye and went home. So Bill and myself continued on, and I was pleased to hear Bill breathing very heavily on those hills on the second lap. I thought, great, I





should be able to drop him on that hill going into the finish. However, I started to get suspicious on the third lap, when he suddenly seemed to be riding the hills much better, but I stuck to my plan. I took off up that last hill, giving everything I had, but at the top my gap was only about 10 metres and the bugger caught me in the run to the finish line. So, only 5th place!

On the third day we rose again to do battle with the individual time trial. This race started at a tiny place I had never heard of, called Woodchester, up in the more southerly Adelaide Hills. And the weather was appalling – low cloud and fog, cold and drizzling rain with a gale blowing up off Gulf St Vincent. The 25 km course snaked around over a short, steep climb, then descended towards the sea (not that we could see it) before turning around and returning up the hill and finishing not far from the start. I remember sitting in the car for an hour before my start with my brother, who lives in Mount Barker only about 20 km away, looking for any sign of the weather clearing, but that never eventuated. Boy, I was certainly grateful for his moral support. But I eventually had to get out, got all my gear ready, did some sort of warm-up on the road and then lined up for my start.

That wind was horrific. Going up that climb not long out from the start I was in my bottom gear and struggling. Then down the undulating descent to the halfway point I battled into this wind, sometimes in the small ring gear on downhill sections. It took an eternity to get down to the turnaround, freezing cold and wet – sheer torture. And the wind seemed to be

coming in a bit from the right and I was afraid that it might not be such a good tailwind going back. But as soon as I did turn, the bike took off like it was a motorbike – relief! In the end I finished 4th overall behind three TT specialists, so I was pleased with that.

So there you have it. Three races in which I was happy with my performance, but no medals. So you can imagine my astonishment when, about a week or two after getting back home, I received an email from the organisers saying that I had won the overall champions award! I started to write an email back to explain their mistake, but then went back to the results to get my facts straight. Only then did it dawn on me that I was the only entrant to finish all three events. And, you know, there were three others who just had to finish the time trial to beat me, but they didn't start. And Rob Brazell, who probably should have won, didn't enter the ITT.

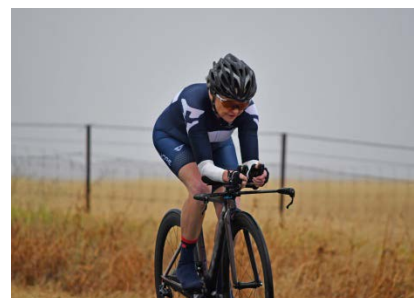
All I can say is that I am pleased with my performances, and I feel proud that I have the ability to race with this field of elite performers in this most important event. And I note that Steve Bradbury still has his Olympic gold medal!

I must add one more thing. These three events were run by three different Adelaide cycling clubs, and I thought every one did a magnificent job. They were run meticulously, to scheduled times, the courses were good, well marked and well marshalled, briefings were thorough, nothing that I know of went wrong, and everyone was very friendly and helpful. My thanks to all the hard-working folk who did all this work.



Eastern members in action in the 2020 AVCC National Championships criterium and road race. Clockwise from top left: Stef Kirsch (head down, on the attack); Keith Wade; Sue Sharples and Pam Vandersluys (less than a bike length apart at the finish of the crit); Keith again; Pam V. and Paula McGovern; and ... Steve Ross. Photos: Andrew Watts/Watts Capture





And in the time trial: Stef Kirsch (top); Russell Newnham and Rob Suter (middle, left and right); Steve Ross, Keith Wade and Pam Vandersluys (bottom, left to right). Photos: Andrew Watts/Watts Capture

How life has changed

Who would have thought a few months ago that we would have to keep our social distance from everyone to be able to survive in the world we live in. Normally we ride, train and enjoy that social atmosphere with mates. Some always train alone but love the competitive side of our sport on the weekends, or whenever there is a club race to participate in. It's never about the prize money; it's more about trying to ride like our heroes – the guys and gals in the pro peloton – within our own races and grades.

Like millions all over the world, I'm saddened by how many confirmed cases there are and extremely saddened by the deaths, but happy that a lot of people have recovered. I'm also saddened for the children, the millions of workers who have been displaced, our economies worldwide. Hopefully we can all bounce back when this is over. But I'm very grateful for all of the medical professionals who are fighting daily battles to keep us alive.

What does COVID-19 mean for us cyclists? We must keep our social distance – a true distance from each other – and use this time to help everyone at large. We need to be watchful about keeping our fellow Australians safe and especially our families, and our fit bodies safe. For those who can, ride indoors and embrace your trainers with Zwift or what other program you use.

For those like me who continue to ride outside, please, you must ride by yourself. Is it inconvenient? Does it suck? Who cares? Well, you must care, not only for yourself, but for your families, your mates, your work colleagues and your fellow Australians. We will all get back on the roads and trails again soon enough and share the joy that is cycling. But for now we just need it to be a little less intense so that all of society can recover.

Hopefully when this is all over we will be able to start racing again. Even though we ride in different grades, we also have so much love and respect for each other and will share a drink and a laugh again.

My goal this year was to be more social and go on group rides, and this has put a bit of a damper on that. But I'm using this time to build a base so, when racing does start again, hopefully, I'll be ready. For some of you this could be the first time which you have had to stay away from your parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters. Welcome to my world (how isolated I feel at times)! You can stay connected through apps like Messenger, Instagram and WhatsApp, just to name a few. I know personally not all of my family (brothers and sisters) use Facebook, but we are now all connected on WhatsApp, which is web based. One of my brothers lives in Peru and it's great to be able to post something and get his and everyone else's reaction to that post straight away – if they are awake.

Stay safe and look after yourselves, your families and loved ones.

Pat Ruys



Future events

Eastern CC events

As advised on page 1 of this newsletter and elsewhere, all Eastern races are suspended until further notice in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

VCV events

After careful consideration and discussion, the Executive Committee of the VCV is recommending that all racing is suspended until 30 April 2020 when the situation will be reviewed. This means that the State Championships, the Bill Long Handicap and the Benghazi will be postponed until further notice. Full refund of all entry fees will apply. This may take a few days; please be patient.

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