

Junior TOUR OF CANBERRA

Words: NZ Bike
Images: Rebecca Denholm

As part of BikeNZ's junior development programme, an U17 team was selected to represent New Zealand at the 2014 Peter Blackshaw Real Estate Junior and Women's Canberra Tour. These aspiring athletes excelled in all aspects of the tour, demonstrating valuable team skills to secure first and second placings in the general classification for both U17 men and women.

The tour was held over the weekend 10-11 May, hosting U17 and below plus an open women's category. The event comprised of four stages, including a time trial and road race on the Saturday and a road race and criterium on Sunday.

Previous GC winners include the current elite road national champion, Rushlee Buchanan, and pro-team rider Sam Bewley. New Zealand's Robert Stannard and Mikayla Harvey, both of whom performed well at the recent club nationals, can now be added to the list. Stannard also took out the U17 men's time trial, and Alexandra's Nicole Shields won the time

trial for U17 women.

U17 men's coach John Rippon asserts the team's success at the tour is a direct result of work put in at junior development camps. At these camps, the young athletes get to know each other, and learn how to handle themselves in competition, both on and off the road. "I knew the squad was good," said Rippon, "I just didn't realise just quite how good. The tour gave us the chance to benchmark the team against their Aussie counterparts, and the results speak for themselves."

Rippon was impressed by the level of maturity shown by the team as a whole, and he's pleased

to be part of a culture shift – these young athletes are already aware that a team focus ahead of an individual focus is what produces results. Rippon notes that Brayden Stephens and Carne Groube, who placed 11th and 12th respectively in the GC, sacrificed individual glory to aid their teammates and secure the win for New Zealand overall.

Rippon emphasises that this sort of teamwork is what will be expected should any of these young riders go on to race in professional teams.

"We're creating something that other kids want to be part of, as well as providing a smooth transition

“ ”
The tour gave us the chance to benchmark the team against their Aussie counterparts, and the results speak for themselves.



FROM L-R - MIKAYLA HARVEY, JESSICA REID, NICOLE SHIELDS, PHOEBE MCCAUGHAN, CHARLOTTE MILNE, CHRISTIN LAMBLEY



FROM L-R - PHOEBE MCCAUGHAN, NICOLE SHIELDS, CHRISTINE LAMBLEY, MIKAYLA HARVEY (OBSURED)

to the next level of competition," said Rippon. U17 women's coach, Katri Laike, agrees wholeheartedly.

"Although the team's cycling ability improves dramatically as a result of the development camps and overseas competition, this isn't all they're learning," said Laike.

"They're also picking up valuable life skills and becoming responsible young adults." The teenage cyclists chose what to eat for dinner whilst away, and organised cooking and cleaning duties amongst themselves, impressing both coaches. The teens' maturity

allowed for greater focus on the job at hand: winning the Junior Tour of Canberra.

Laike acknowledges this year's field was smaller than in other years, but maintains the race was all the more competitive for it, with the top U17 Australian girls present. The course itself was pretty brutal and included many tough climbs, providing valuable experience for the team. Over the next few months the majority of the teens will enjoy a well-deserved break, prior to winter selection of development squads. Their results in Canberra certainly places them in good stead. •

The New Zealand team for the Junior Tour of Canberra:

U17 Boys:

Robert Stannard, Campbell Stewart, Tom Sexton (did not travel, was replaced by Carne Groube), Chris Denholm, Brayden Stephens, Connor Brown.

First reserve: Carne Goube

Second reserve: Joshua Smith

U17 Girls:

Mikayla Harvey, Charlotte Milne, Christine Lambley, Phoebe McCaughan, Jessica Reid, Nicole Shields

First reserve: Emily Shearman

Second reserve: Libby Arbuckle

Results (Top 3 Only):

Time Trial, Junior Women's U17:

Nicole Shields (BikeNZ), 14:41, 1;

Mikayla Harvey (BikeNZ), +00:08, 2;

Kristina Clonan (SCCC), +00:12, 3.

General Classification, Junior

Women's U17:

Mikayla Harvey (BikeNZ), 2:28:54, 1; Nicole

Shields (BikeNZ), +00:13, 2;

Nicola MacDonald (HDCC), +00:14, 3.

Time Trial, Junior Men's U17:

Robert Stannard (BikeNZ), 17:35, 1;

Jordan Louis (VIKI), +00:20, 2;

James Fouche (NZ), +00:26, 3.

General Classification, Junior Men's

U17:

Robert Stannard (BikeNZ), 2:49:39, 1;

Campbell Stewart (BikeNZ), +00:19, 2;

Jordan Louis (VIKI), +00:36, 3.



FROM L-R - JAMES FOUCHE, CARNE GROUBE, CHRIS DENHOLM, BRAYDEN STEPHENS, ROBERT STANNARD (OVERALL WINNER), JOHN RIPPON (COACH), CONNOR BROWN, CAMPBELL STEWART