

## **D Grade Race Report**

*By Andrew McGrath*

### **Stage 1**

**39km, relatively flat, with a hill climb at the start.**

Due to the rise in altitude, it was deemed the first 5km would be under control, preventing D-grade being torn apart from the gun. Riders still managed to get dropped, which meant the lead car was reduced to a crawl, allowing the bunch to reform.

Lots of little bursts at the front, with the bigger guys trying to shake things up a little, but nothing dangerous. Tough going into the headwind, so happy to stay nestled in the pack.

Coming around the second last corner, someone drifts out into Laurie's path leaving him with nowhere to go other than straight through 3 of those long witches hat thingies, (you know the ones they use for lane closures) how he didn't eat the bitumen was a miracle! Bunch sprint, rolled through near the back.

### **Stage 2**

**66Km, 3 KOM's.**

**1st KOM 12km mark - 1km at 9.5%**

**2nd KOM 32km mark - 400m at 8.8%**

**3rd KOM 46km mark - 2.5km at 6.6%**

One guy attacked off the front after only 2km, as the 1st KOM was only 10km away on the flat, I couldn't afford to give him a shot, the bunch didn't want to chase, so straight to the front to bring this guy back. Once I had him within 50m, I called someone through, letting him hang out to dry. Everyone was waiting for the first climb, so the pace wasn't too bad. At the 12km mark I went as hard as I could, HR 188-192 for the last 800m, result 1st KOM, and a 5 sec time bonus.

The climb resulted in a 9 man breakaway, which was caught after staying away for 11km. Disappointed but relieved to get a chance to catch my breath, and allow my HR, which was through the roof to come down to a sane level. Looking at my cheat sheet on my wrist, told me the next maximum effort was coming up in 5km, so no time to do anything silly till then. Saw the 400m to KOM, and took off like the clappers, seemed to surprise the group, result won 2nd KOM and another 5 sec time bonus. Sat up and waited for the bunch to reform and get some rest.

Group stayed together until Zig Zag Rd, I knew this point was going to be crucial, so moved to the front, and prepared to put myself in a world of pain. Kept looking back to see if the chasers were gaining, but had enough to take 3rd KOM. Tried to keep the power down, but my calves were really feeling the pinch, and was forced to wait for the trailing group of 4. D grade was totally ripped apart, knowing the break was on 2 guys on the front really slammed the accelerator to the floor, all I could do was hang on for dear life. I wanted to work with the group once I got my legs back, which never happened. After one of them calls me through, accusing me of just sitting on (I wasn't the only one mind you!), I went to the front, finding myself out the back by 5m soon after.....not doing that again!

Managed to roll through for 3rd in the group of 4...and 7sec time bonus

Think we had almost 2 mins on the next group.

I knew it was going to be tight at the top, as the winner gets 15 secs, and wasn't sure how he did in the KOMs.

After congratulating and thanking the 2 workhorses, got the sarcastic "yeah thanks"... "Mate I was stuffed"... Yeah you didn't seem to have trouble winning the KOM"...so because I take 3 KOMs I cop the full brunt where the other guy also sitting on gets a free ride with no questions asked. It's a tad difficult to do a turn when your on the limit.

End of Stage 2....7sec lead, yellow jersey 11sec to 3rd and 18 to 4th.

## **Stage 3**

**52km**

**KOM 42km**

Restless night, slept lightly. Made sure I got into town nice and early to check the results, and of course pick something up jotted down the lotto numbers on my wrist with time differences. Plan for this stage was to mark 3 riders, if they went I had to chase, but was quite prepared to allow others up the road. The pace picked up around the 10km mark, a couple of k short of the first KOM, as a group of 3 gapped the bunch..no problems, happy for the time bonus to disappear, until 3rd decides to give chase, forcing me to take off also. Group comes back. Going up where the KOM is meant to be, reveals no KOM at all, so much for that.

*Editor: Sorry Andrew, changed the course for D Grade and Women and the map was not correct.*

Nice cruisey pace, interrupted by 2 little mutts, and a calf frightened by the oncoming lycra, panicked charging straight into the barbed wire fence, got stuck, desperately tried to get free, jerked back and forth until it managed to burst through into the paddock....that's gotta hurt, poor thing. Back to cruisey pace, till Merino. It was here that a Labrador proceeded to give us a lead out up the hill, before peeling off into a side street. This hill kicked the peleton into action, this stage was about to get serious. 10km to go it was on, took 2nd in the KOM, but lost time to the guy who I had 11 sec on. This made the stage finish crucial, as wasn't confident with the flat crit coming up.

Going over the KOM, I had 3rd and 4th with me, but not the guy who was second...time to put the hammer down. This was to no avail, as the bunch managed to catch us 2km latter. After we dropped our guards, an opportunistic attack from the guy coming 2nd, and quickly he had a gap. This meant I had to lead the chase, thankfully bringing him back, before any damage was done. I was doing too much at the front, thankfully Rojas (Coburg) came to the front to help me out, giving me a spell before the all important rise to the finish.

With 2.5km to go I upped the tempo, trying to pull away, but couldn't shake the 3 behind me in GC. Hard sprint to the line to take 2nd, 1st to Gebert (Coburg), but no threat.

Nervous wait to see what my lead was going into the crit. I later discovered the guy who was coming 2nd didn't know he had to claim, and was thus relegated to last for the stage...tough break.

## Stage 4

**10laps of a 1.8km circuit.**

**Lead: 21 sec to 2nd**

**26 sec to 3rd...forget about the rest.**

This meant I only had to mark 1 guy.

Fun crit with nice wide corners, 6 in all! Good circuit, but flat as a tack...something wrong with that picture, surely a crit has to have a hill

Stayed near the front, when I could to keep out of trouble. Intermediate sprint at 5 laps carried a 10 sec bonus, glued to the guys wheel, no bonus, from here I knew all I had to do was stay upright for 5 laps. Decided I'd have a bit of fun and show off the jersey for the next 3 laps sitting on the front, which the group was happy to let me do. Rolled thorough near the back of the pack very chuffed.

The final margin was 21 sec. Very well run tour, thoroughly enjoyable.

## D Grade Final General Classification

	<b>Rider</b>	<b>Club</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>@</b>
1	Andrew McGrath	Hawthorn Citizens Youth Club	5:02:59	
2	Evan Butler	Blackburn CC	5:03:20	0:00:21
3	Malcolm Tirrabassi	Mt Gambier CC	5:03:23	0:00:24
4	Nicholas Robinson	Caulfield-Carnegie CC	5:03:25	0:00:26
5	Neale Adams	Caulfield-Carnegie CC	5:04:56	0:01:57
6	Peter Doody	Mildura-Coomella	5:05:05	0:02:06
7	Stuart Verrier	Brunswick CC	5:05:36	0:02:37
8	Richard McClelland	Albury-Wodonga CC	5:06:35	0:03:36
9	Wayne Gebert	Coburg CC	5:06:36	0:03:37
10	Laurie Lovelock	Hawthorn Citizens Youth Club	5:07:32	0:04:33
11	Gerard O'Brien	Horsham CC	5:09:44	0:06:45
12	Jason Laird	Coburg CC	5:10:36	0:07:37
13	Andres Rojas	Coburg CC	5:11:18	0:08:19
14	Brad Hazell	Albury-Wodonga CC	5:11:38	0:08:39
15	Adrian Sinnatt	Blackburn CC	5:11:46	0:08:47
16	Thomas Dermody	Mt Gambier CC	5:12:32	0:09:33
17	Ken Dacomb	Hamilton CC	5:13:10	0:10:11
18	Richard Senior	Albury-Wodonga CC	5:15:11	0:12:12
19	Steve Petersen	Brunswick CC	5:15:41	0:12:42
20	Peter Ladd	Bendigo & District CC	5:18:03	0:15:04
21	Stephen Cook	St Kilda CC	5:20:14	0:17:15
22	Troy Sait	Bendigo & District CC	5:23:56	0:20:57
23	Clive Madder	Brunswick CC	5:28:43	0:25:44
24	John Lokan	Mildura-Coomealla	5:29:01	0:26:02
25	Malcolm Clayton	Ararat & District CC	5:29:30	0:26:31
26	Matt Janssen	Norwood CC	5:30:24	0:27:25
27	Tom Barry	MTBA	5:35:26	0:32:27
28	Stuart Pratt	Mt Gambier CC	5:41:04	0:38:05
29	Ron Petersen	Chelsea & Peninsula CC	5:42:08	0:39:09
30	Greg Gillard	Coburg CC	5:42:31	0:39:32
31	Chris Hitchen	Sunbury & Hume Districts CC	5:42:54	0:39:55
32	Douglas Reynolds	Blackburn CC	5:57:52	0:54:53
33	Howard Bartlett	Mt Gambier CC	6:01:48	0:58:49
34	Matthew Reynolds	Blackburn CC	6:24:35	1:21:36