

Hegert on high after Tour win
Monday, 10 April 2006

JASON Hegert has his eye on the world after taking his road cycling career to a new high with victory in the Tour of the Southern Grampians.

With the Ballarat 21-year-old preparing to ride in China, Africa and Canada for the Sydney-based professional team of FRF Couriers Caravello later this year, his first major win could hardly have come at a better time.

Hegert has only been with FRF Couriers Caravello since the start of this year and he has no doubt the break-through will lift his standing in team ranks.

"This is big for me," said Hegert, who remained on a high yesterday, 24 hours after taking the honours in the two-day four-stage event at Coleraine.

"It's the biggest win of my career."

Hegert made what turned out to be the first of two decisive moves to set up victory in the 116-kilometre hilly second stage on Saturday.

He was one of three riders to attack and put more than 10 minutes on the main pelaton.

Although he finished third in the stage, Hegert said the breakaway effectively narrowed the battle for the tour victory down to three.

This allowed him to ride more conservatively in the 70km third stage and save energy for a major effort in the fourth stage, a 48km criterium on the streets of Coleraine.

Hegert began Sunday 12 seconds off the pace in third place.

He picked up intermediate sprints and then produced his best for the last kilometre, making a solo sprint to pick up the stage win and the seconds needed to get the overall victory.

Hegert previously rode with the Ballarat-based Cycle City development team and hopes to one day base himself in Europe.

His next ride will be in the three-day Tour of Canberra after Easter.