

Tour crown to Shaw

PATRICK Shaw has launched a new season of cycling with a win in the two-day Tour of the Grampians at Coleraine.

The Victorian Institute of Sport - Bianchi Bicycles cyclist inherited the crown from fellow Ballarat rider Jason Hegert, who was invited to start the tour in the yellow jersey.

The win came as a surprise for Shaw and has sparked his hunger for more success this season.

"It was a lot better than I expected," Shaw said.

"It's good for Ballarat cycling to keep the title in Ballarat."

The mountainous format of racing suited Shaw, who thrives on steep hill climbs.

Shaw entered the tour on the back of a gruelling alpine training camp through Bright, Hotham and Falls Creek.

He flaunted his ability to ride small gears and a strong knowledge of the tour's greatest threat, Australian road champion Darren Lapthorne.

"I think it all came down to my experience and hard-training," Shaw said.

"I've known Darren for a while.

"I know his style, which was a bit of a benefit, and could understand and read his moves."

Shaw will make the most of 10 rest days before embarking on a heavy competition schedule, starting with the Australian Cycling Federation's Tour of Canberra, closely followed by the Oceania Road Cycling Championship.

He will then travel to Europe with the Australian Institute of Sport's under-23 development squad for road races in Germany and Italy.