

### **Stage 3 – 72km**

At 72 kilometres and three K.O.M's the riders may once again have been mistaken in thinking that the stage would be easy. The fact that the roads were almost entirely rolling hills made for another gruelling stage. Once again it was the duo of Mackenzie and Shaw that attacked early. The peloton was not willing to give the same latitude as the day before and the two never managed to create a meaningful gap. This was not through lack of trying though. Mackenzie would have been a prime candidate for most aggressive rider.

The stage took a familiar pattern, a selection occurred over the top of the second K.O.M. and this pack was further divided some 20 kilometres from the finish. Craig McCartney (De Grandi Cycles) looked to have the power and strength to succeed in this final road stage. McCartney had ridden with conviction on Saturday without result and looked like a man on a mission. He joined five other riders; Scott Peoples (Lloyd Morgan), Daniel Nelms (Italo), Mackenzie, Jason Hegert and Johnny Walker (CBD Cycles) in the leading group, that managed to stay away from the group containing the top four in GC (Pollock, Bradford, Shaw & O'Brien)

The finish of stage 3 was strategically placed at the top of a four kilometre drag/hill. It was a fitting finale to a race that was a true test of a riders climbing ability. An outstanding effort from Scott Peoples allowed him to make amends for a disappointing stage 2. He attacked the group of six and managed to maintain a 12 second gap to the dangerous McCartney, with Nelms a further four seconds behind in third.