

Saturday saw the Griffith Cycle Club hosting the 31st Dean Carter Memorial road race. This event was round three of the Tour de Riverina.

A good roll up of 67 riders faced the starter with the handicapper splitting the field into seven groups.

Griffith rider Malcolm Blake became the sixth local rider to win the event when he timed his sprint perfectly to take a great win from another local rider, Jeff Shaw.

Blake and Shaw were both riding in group 5 and enjoyed a 10:30 minute handicap. Their big group worked well together and at the half way point were well placed.

At the half way point it looked to be group 4 with David Alpen and Kingsley Massey who were going to win the race as they had the biggest group in the field and had worked well with the tail wind to the u-turn. Unfortunately after the turn too many riders started to struggle in the headwind and took the sit on option.

Group 5 kept it together with a greater level of commitment from the riders as they raced the final 30 kilometers into the headwind. Mal Blake gave a glimpse of what was to come when he won the intermediate sprint with 20km still to race.

The scratch bunch had picked up groups 2 and 3 with 25km still to race but the speed appeared to be lacking in the chase. Griffith riders Paul Clancy, Rob Hall, Jeff Stoll and Peter Budd were in the mix near the front as were Jason Minato, Steve Bertoldo and Phil Twigg.

With one kilometer to the line group 5 had a 300 metre lead over group 4 with the back markers rapidly closing a similar distance behind.

As the leaders rounded the last bend into the finishing straight Jeff Shaw kicked for home. With the head wind finish it was going to take a powerful sprint to go the distance.

Mal Blake was biding his time for the right place to make his move and when it came he kicked hard and quickly moved up and passed the tiring Shaw.

Blake flew across the line to record the biggest win of his career from a gallant Shaw who held on for second place. Eddie O'Farrell from Wagga rounded out the podium.

Leanne Kennedy took the prize for the first female finisher with her strong tenth place and also won the prize for the first unplaced local.

Albury rider Rhys Pollack took fastest time honours with a time of 1:19.50 at an average speed of over 45kph.

In all there was a record 21 Griffith Club riders who competed in the interclub event. The next Tour de Riverina event is in Coolamon on 29 May.