

Last Sunday saw the Griffith Cycle Club hold its first race for 2011. The 42km handicap event had 10 starters which was reasonable considering the number of riders competing in the Hillston triathlon.

The handicapper split the field into four groups. Wendy Minato was having her first race and she had Robert Minato and Peggy Carpenter for company. They started with a 12:00 minute lead.

Next away was Frank Signor and Dick Hore who had a 10:00 minute handicap.

Leanne Kennedy found herself on chopping block after some impressive displays out training. She had new club rider Peter Pearson and Mal Blake to help her try to overcome the 4:00 minute handicap.

Jason Minato and Peter Budd were the lonely scratch riders with a big task in front of them.

The conditions were windy with gusts of up to 30kph making the last half of the course very tough.

At the half way point of the race the second limit group of Signor and Hore had caught the limit group and were now working well to try to stay away from the chasers.

The chopping block group were working smoothly with Pearson doing a power of work in his first race with the club but had great assistance from both Kennedy and Blake.

The scratchies were doing it tougher with only two riders but Minato was putting in a super ride on limited training.

With one lap to go the leaders were down to two riders with Signor and Hore alone at the front with a mix up seeing Minato just off the group and Carpenter watching the finish from the sidelines.

The chopping block group however weren't to be denied and were putting in a great ride. Half way along the back straight they made contact with the leading pair and with tired legs settled on getting to the finish.

Minato and Budd were still pushing hard but were still out of sight of the leaders and had no chance of making up the gap.

The race was now down to the five leaders and as they made their way around the final corner into the home straight Kennedy found herself stuck on the front.

She powered up the gears with the wind assisting but with the line approaching Blake made his move and kicked clear. Super sprinter Signor tried to go with Blake's kick but just couldn't quite get to the wheel.

Blake flashed across the line as the first winner for 2011 with Signor second. Pearson was third after his strong ride and Hore fourth and Kennedy fifth. Jason Minato took the fastest time honours after a strong ride.

Next week will be the first round of the Griffith Motorcycle Centre Cup with riders required to be registered by 8:45am for the 9:00am start. Riders are reminded to bring your race numbers.