

Last Sunday the Griffith Cycle Club riders contested the A grade road Club Championships over 63 kilometres of the Hanwood course.

Given the nature of the flat circuit the smart money was on a bunch sprint to decide the race and that is exactly what occurred. The final kilometres saw the whole race field still in the mix with the championship up for grabs.

Eleven riders faced the starter for the Clubs first trophy race of 2010. The first lap saw Jason Minato launch the first to attack but this was quickly nullified by the peloton.

Dick Hore was the next to make a move and he rolled off the front in the back half on lap one. Wondering what he was doing out the front all by himself Hore was soon joined by Kingsley Massey who quickly jumped across the gap.

The peloton allowed the escapees their freedom and a large gap was soon opened up. The peloton was working smoothly behind with race favourites Minato and Budd getting assistance from Rob Hall, Russell Webb, Mitch Harrison, Neil Warnock and Rob Houghton. Sitting in behind and saving their legs were Matt Nugan and Jenni Massey who was competing against the guys.

The laps started to tick by and the two leaders had moved out to a 1:30 minute lead at the third lap. Harrison saw his opportunity and attacked taking Rob Houghton with him. This pair put on the pressure and the chase was on to the leaders.

In the peloton behind there was no panic and they continued to roll through albeit at an increased pace. Harrison was riding hard and was closing the gap to the leaders but he had lost Houghton who dropped back to the safety of the chasing peloton.

Harrison made contact with Massey and Hore on the back straight of lap three with the peloton now some 40 seconds behind.

The gap started to grow once again and was out to over a minute as Massey and Harrison continued put on the pressure. The end of lap four saw Hore end his race and the leaders were now down to two.

The peloton behind were picking up speed and quickly reeling in the leaders. Minato, Webb and Stoll were riding strongly and the Leeton pair of Warnock and Houghton were also working well.

Half way into lap five the leaders could see their break was going to be futile with the bunch closing and they sat up to regroup. The peloton was now all together and Minato wasted no time in launching the next attack.

Across the line and into the final lap the peloton was back together. Stoll was the next to launch an attack and he was putting everything into it. Minato had taken his wheel and Budd was sticking close to Minato followed by Hall.

Stoll launched his next move 800 metres later but again was closely marked by Minato, Budd and Hall. A small split in the field soon came together as the pace on the front slowed.

Stoll was now stuck on the front with no rider wanting to take a turn. With three kilometers to race Houghton and Warnock took the lead and increased the pace. Stoll took a breather readying himself for his next attack.

With 1200 metres to race that attack came with Stoll out of the saddle 200 metres before the final corner to start the race finale hostilities. His aggressive attack helped to shatter the field as they approached the last corner but he still had Minato and Budd in contact.

Stoll attacked once again out of the corner in a move that would potentially win him many races but in this race it was not to be. Stalking behind was the dangerous form of Jason Minato the clubs premiere sprinter whilst behind him was an in form Peter Budd.

The rest of the field was blown away by the Stoll surges and it was going to be a duel to the finish between two very strong sprinters.

As Stoll pulled over with 700 metres to the line Minato, looking behind saw the damage that the Stoll attacks had done and saw his opportunity. He kicked hard for the line hoping to take Budd by surprise. He got a small gap but Budd was fighting hard to close it.

With 400 metres to the line Budd made contact and got a few seconds rest on the Minato wheel before Minato launched his final kick to the line with 230 metres to race.

Budd was in good position and more importantly in good form and pulled up beside Minato with 170 metres to the line. Minato surged yet again in one last attempt to break his rival but Budd was up to the challenge and pulled ahead as the line approached.

Budd took a great win from a courageous Minato in second who tried everything he could in those last 700 metres. Rob Hall was third, Russell Webb fourth and Matt Nugan a great ride in fifth.

“That was a super hard last kilometre” said an elated Budd after his win. “Firstly with Jeff going hard both into and out of the final corner. Then Jason surprising me a little when he went with 700 metres to the line. I didn’t expect that. It was really hard to catch him. I was doing over 55kph just to get near him,” said Budd.

With his win Budd now becomes the first rider in the Club’s history to win all the major club trophies. The A grade road championship, the A grade time trial championship, the annual pointscore and the Dean Carter Memorial road race trophies now all have a home on the shelf in the Budd bike shed.

This week will see the Club riders competing in the third round of the Griffith Motor Cycle Centre Cup. Racing commences at 9:00am with riders to register at the start by 8:45am