

Last Sunday saw 21 riders face the starter for the 9th and penultimate round of the Country First Credit Union Cup.

The course for the day was the tough 37km hill circuit which was made for the series leader to defend her position atop the leader board.

Her serious challengers for the title going into the round were Wendy Aitken, Peter Bastianon and Paul Clancy.

The handicapper split the field into eight small groups. The limit group of three started the racing with an 18:00 minute handicap. Michael O'Meara was making a welcomed return to racing and he had Jo Polkinghorne and Peter Stockwell for company.

Frank Signor, Robert Minato and Dick Hore were next away on 11:00 minutes.

The biggest group of the day with four riders got underway at the 7:30 minute mark with Maxwell Hopp, Wendy Aitken, Jenni Massey and Lyall Mumford.

A minute and a half back on 6:00 minutes were David Smith, Kieran Carney and Peter Bastianon.

Nigel Kennedy and Mitch Harrison started on 5:00 minutes.

Rick Young and Kingsley Massey received a 3:30 minute handicap. Phil Twigg and Frank Mastrobattista were the chopping block group on 2:00 minutes, whilst Jason Minato and Steve Graham made up scratch.

At the Yenda turn the race was in the balance but by the top of Rifle Range Road with only the hill to cross it was beginning to unfold.

Stockwell and Polkinghorne were out alone at the front of the race with only 13km still to race. They were being pursued by the combined might of the four groups behind them who had come together just after Beelbanger.

David Smith attacked the chasing group on the lookout climb and was off in a solo pursuit of the lead.

Mastrobattista was riding well and putting in some good turns in the chase by the back markers.

Stockwell dug deep on the final airport climb and Polkinghorne just slipped off the back. Stockwell kept up a solid pace to the line to take a great solo win. Jo Polkinghorne held her nerves and the body together as she soloed in for a super second place.

David Smith try as he might could not overhaul the leaders but he did take a gallant third place. The series leader Jenni Massey had her hopes of wrapping up the series dashed when she was caught by the back markers at the top of the final climb and she would finish out of the points.

Mitch Harrison took fourth place after a solid ride whilst Phil Twigg took fifth. Frank Mastrobattista took sixth place and final points for the race.

The series leader board remains unchanged at the top with Massey followed by Aitken and Bastianon still the same as before the race. The big mover however was the days winner Peter Stockwell who has put himself into contention for the overall.

To date from the nine races there have been nine different winners atop the podium in another outstanding series for the unsung handicapper. Once again the series will go down to the final race with four riders still with a chance at the title.

The final race of the series shall be held on 23rd November.