

2012 - Mathew, Macdermids & Manawatu

Karapoti took a few weeks to get to the start line, but once it did it was dominated by riders from just up the road in the Manawatu.

Mathew Who?

If Karapoti was a cartoon, "Mathew Who" would have been the collective thought-bubble among the pre-race favourites when Mathew Waghorn hit the front on the first big climb. No doubt they'd worked out who the 18 year old Feilding rider was by the end of the race, but by then it was too late.

Crossing the line in 2hrs 29min 05secs, even Waghorn himself looked a tad surprised. "I haven't ridden Karapoti for four years," said the one time youngest ever finisher at Karapoti," so I just wanted a good ride and to make the Sub-3 Hour Club."

But the former Oceania junior champion was just playing it cool. With defending champion Anton Cooper, 2010 champion Tim Wilding and 2009 runner-up Brendan Sharratt not available for Karapoti Take-2, 2012 was wide open. Waghorn rode near the front for the first 10k through Karapoti Gorge and the Hukinga Forest Block before putting the hammer down on the Warm Up Climb and Deadwood Ridge.

"I wasn't really trying to break away," he said afterward. "I was feeling good and decided to push it up the first hill to see what would happen. After a while I looked back and was pretty surprised to see no one was really with me."

Mat Waghorn



Behind Waghorn, Wellington's Dave Sharpe, chased hard. But perhaps too hard, because approaching the Rock Garden Sharpe a puncture resulted in an impressive crash that saw any visions of winning Karapoti disappear.

Sharpe would shake off the crash to ride from fifth back to second, passing Upper Hutt's Gavin McCarthy and Wellington's Tony Keith in the final few kilometres as just 18 seconds separated second, third and fourth at the finish line. But by then Waghorn had been soaking up his surprise win for five minutes.

Macdermid Again

Karapoti 2012 was billed as a year for the ladies, with defending champion Elina Ussher (Nel) facing 2008 and 2009 champion Fiona Macdermid (Palm Nth), 2011 runner-up Kim Hamer-Hurst (UH), world junior number one Jolanda Neff (Switz) and 2005 winner, Commonwealth Games silver medallist and world number seven Rosara Joseph (Wgtn). But while the southerly storm put paid to a potential race record race, two of them put on a great show at Karapoti Take-2.

Only Fiona Macdermid and Kim Hamer-Hurst returned two weeks later. Both live close, with Hamer-Hurst being an Upper Hutt doctor and Macdermid being just a 90min drive up the road. But more importantly, both have a close attraction to Karapoti.

Fiona Macdermid



MULTIPLE KARAPOTI WINNERS

Kathy Lunch	Nelson	8	1989, 90, 91, 92, 94, 95, 96, 97
Jon Hume	Tauranga	4	1991, 1992, 1993, 1994
Tim Vincent	Nelson	3	2001, 2003, 2005
Fiona Macdermid	Palm Nth	3	2008, 2009, 2012
Craig Lawn	Lower Hutt	2	1995, 1996
Kashi Leuchs	Dunedin	2	1998, 2002
Sadie Parker	Auckland	2	2000, 2001
Susy Pryde	Auckland	2	2002, 2003
Peter Hatton	Australia	2	2004, 2006

Macdermid, of course won Karapoti in 2008 and 2009, both times coming within seconds of breaking Jenni Smith's 2007 race record (2:47:45). Hamer-Hurst is a former British junior rep who returned to the sport after she moved to New Zealand from the UK. In 2011 she nabbed second behind Elina Ussher. In much better shape and with a lot more Karapoti experience behind her, the 33 year old had a good chance of becoming the first Upper Hutt rider to win their own race.

Hamer-Hurst stayed close, tracking Macdermid in the opening 10k and up the Warm Up climb. Macdermid got a small lead on Deadwood Ridge and while Hamer-Hurst refused to give up, the 38 year old Macdermid kept eventually finished by four minutes.

Crossing the line in 2hrs 54min 32secs, Macdermid became just the fourth person and second woman to rack up three wins at Karapoti. Behind her Hamer-Hurst became the 11th woman into the Sub-3 Hour Club at 2:59:59, while Katherine Campbell added to the Manawatu's great day in third.

Classy Kids & Ageless Aces

Karapoti Take-2 turned out to be a pretty fast year, with the Karapoti Hall of Fame getting an overhaul at both ends of the age spectrum.

As recently as 2006 no one over 50 years had ever broken three hours at Karapoti. That year Porirua endurance legend Niels Madsen clocked 2hrs 54min 51secs, but a year later Australian Hans Dielacher clocked 2:46:58. Many thought that record (Expert 50-59 years) might stand forever, but in 2010 Wellington's Ian Paintin clocked 2:45:05. This year he returned again to take it down to 2:43.21.

Kapiti's Dale Lopez must have been shaking his head when he heard about Paintin's record. A decade or so ago he was winning the Expert 50-59 category in a shade over three hours. In 2012 Lopez set a new 60-plus record

of 3hrs 15min. But he must be looking at Ian Paintin knowing his record won't last. Although by then it won't matter, because Lopez will be rewriting the 70-plus age group.

At the other end of the age spectrum 12 year olds Eden Cruise and Zia Macdermid are tagging their names on the walls of the Karapoti Hall of Fame.

Zia actually made her first mark three years ago when she was spotted enjoying Karapoti's 20k Challenge while Mum won the feature 50k Classic. This year Mum and daughter did the double again, with Zia becoming the youngest ever 20k winner.

Eden Cruise also made history in 2009 when at age nine he became the youngest ever finisher in the feature 50k Classic. This year the Porirua pocket-rocket became both the youngest ever winner of the junior expert (under-19yrs) category, and more impressively, the youngest ever member of the Sub-3 Hour Club with 2hrs 46min 11secs that saw him finish 12th overall.

Eden Cruise

