

38th Girvan 3 Day Cycle Race promoted by Wallacehill Cycling Club

Stage 1: Girvan – Girvan, 62 miles

With five previous race winners amongst the 85 riders taking the start of the 38th Girvan 3 Day Cycle Race, and Chris Newton fresh from the World Track Championships in Majorca keen to regain his Premier Calendar leadership following his victory in the Bikeline Two Day, the first stage over 62 miles promised to be a competitive affair.

It was a nervous stage characterised by several crashes in the peloton. Giancarlo Checchi (Rapha Condor RT) narrowly won the first Carrick Gazette King of the Mountains prime at Byne Hill after 2.7 miles. Despite plenty of activity at the front of the race, the field remained together through the long climb and subsequent descent of 'The Screws' with maximum points on the second classified climb going to 1999 Girvan winner Gordon McCauley (Plowman Craven).

It was another former Girvan winner from 17 years ago, Wayne Randall (Sportscover), who briefly went on the attack as the race reached the 25 mile point on the approach to Straiton, but he was swiftly reeled back in by the chasing peloton driven by Adam Broyad (GS Invicta).

By the first Endura Hot Spot Sprint at Kirkmichael after 32 miles, Recycling.co.uk's Ryan Bonser had fallen victim to another crash and was working hard to regain the field. Meanwhile at the front, McCauley was adding a win in the sprint competition to his KOM victory and with top placings at the remaining primes he would secure both Polka Dot and Green Jerseys at the first podium presentation of the race.

With Plowman Craven driving hard at the head of the race, no attack managed to gain an advantage of more than a hand full of metres until the 40 mile marker was reached just outside the village of Dailly. By the final hot spot, as the race returned briefly to Girvan, a seven man leading group had become established, featuring McCauley, James Millard (Plowman Craven), Simon Holt (Recycling Espoirs), Matt Cronshaw (Science in Sport), Malcolm Elliott (Pinarello RT), Gareth Hewitt (KFS Special Vehicles) and Ross Muir (Rapha Condor RT). They were soon joined by Chris Newton (recycling.co.uk), Dean Downing (Rapha Condor RT), Ian Wilkinson (Science in Sport) and Robin Sharman (KFS Special Vehicles). With another former winner John Tanner (Sportscover) also making the junction the twelve leaders slowly increased their advantage as the race covered road surfaces described by one race official as 'exciting'.

With less than 10 miles to go, the lead stood at 14 seconds and five miles later it had increased to 40 seconds. A front wheel puncture for Muir was efficiently repaired and he swiftly regained the lead group. As the leaders turned onto the finishing straight it was Newton who just managed to outpace Tanner and Wilkinson at the line.

Stage 2 – Victory Park Criterium, 16.5 miles

Just over four hours after the completion of stage 1, the riders lined up again for the traditional Saturday evening circuit race around Victory Park in the centre of Girvan. They were flagged away by multi World and Olympic medal winner Chris Hoy, who had spent the afternoon entertaining the large group of youth riders entered for the inaugural Scottish Power Renewables Youth Circuit Race, contested on the same circuit.

A fast pace was established from the start and again it looked unlikely that any breaks would be allowed to get away. Despite a brief effort by the winner of the previous week's Tour of the Reservoir Dean Downing (Rapha Condor RT), and intermediate sprints taken by race leader

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Newton and Tom Barras (Ashfield Merlin), it was a large bunch that contested the final sprint at the line.

Plowman Craven's Tony Gibb launched an attack in the centre of the road and narrowly edged ahead of Wilkinson and Newton at the finish. On the podium, Chris Hoy presented the leaders jerseys with McCauley retaining both Green and Polka Dot and Newton holding on to yellow with a 7 second advantage over Wilkinson and Tanner a further second behind.

Sunday sees the longest stage of the 2007 race with 108 miles of racing to be fought out following a first time start in the town of Newton Stewart.