

## Rush stamps authority on elite men's field while Lucas claims women's series lead in fifth round of Calder Stewart Cycling Series

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Tim Rush won the 93 kilometre elite men's race in the fifth round of the Calder Stewart Cycling Series, the Small Business Accounting Methven Grand Prix, to add to his overall series lead while Sharlotte Lucas won the women's race to claim the lead in the series with one race remaining.

Riding for the Mike Greer Homes cycling team Rush outsprinted Reon Park (TotalPOS Solutions) to claim his first win in the series after the two riders had escaped what was left of the peloton on the days final climb with 14 kilometres left to race, winning in two hours and 17 minutes.

In similar fashion Lucas out sprinted Grace Anderson (Mike Greer Homes Black) to win the women's race in two hours forty minutes.

Dave Rowlands (Christchurch Mitsubishi) continued his dominance of New Zealand masters racing coming home first overall in the masters race holding off Warwick Spence (Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's), over 50 series leader Blair Stuthridge (Protocol Mackleys) and team mate Glen Rewi in a four man sprint to win in two hours and twenty two minutes.

It wasn't long in the elite race before Reon Nolan (TotalPOS Solutions), Guy Carter (L & M Group Ricoh NZ) and PKF Cycling's Louis Brown escaped off the front on the long false flat grinding up towards the days first real test, the Rakaia Gorge.

Liam Aitcheson (Central Benchmarkers-Willbike) and Carter's team mate Tim Chapman bridged across to the leaders before the riders dropped down into the gorge to tackle the day's first tough climb that saw Chapman and Brown get dropped.

The remaining three leaders worked well together until Carter and Aitcheson sat up as the race approached the halfway point at Lake Coleridge leaving Nolan on his own. Nolan was eventually caught with 40 kilometres left to race as the bulk of the field all came back together as the riders headed back towards the Rakaia Gorge and Methven.

The pace went on as the peloton hit the climb back out of the gorge with a selection of riders hitting the front. Rush's team mate Sam Horgan was first to attack on the final stages of the climb and once he was caught Rush went with Park quickly latching on to his wheel, and with the wind at their backs and the Mike Greer Homes and TotalPOS teams doing their best to control the chasers, the two riders quickly went to work to put distance between themselves and the bunch.

Former elite national champion James Williamson (L&M Group Ricoh NZ) made a valiant effort to bridge across to the two leaders in the closing stages, falling short but hanging on to claim third, 50 seconds behind Rush.

Ben Johnstone (Mike Greer Homes) finished eighth, but more importantly was the first Under 23 rider across the line, so added to his series lead in that classification while Hugo Jones (Modus Construct) finished one place ahead of Johnstone to be the first placed Under 19 rider to finish, edging to within six points of Under 19 series leader Oscar Elsworthy (Cycling NZ).

Rush paid tribute to the efforts of his team mates, saying they backed him one hundred percent to go for the win. "They kept me on a leash until the last climb and then I got away with Reon (Park) who was super strong and it was just up to us both to work hard to stay away to the finish," Rush said. "The win just would not have been possible without the team plan and support I had."

The women's race was very active but stayed together through the first nine kilometres until series leader Michaela Kerr, her Mike Greer Homes women's Black team mate Nicole Shields, Benchmark Home's Kate Smith and Ruth Robertson and Susan van der Pol (Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's) all got away before the race defining Rakaia Gorge.

Robertson dropped off the leaders on the climb out of the gorge but as they turned west towards Lake Coleridge they were joined by a group of six riders that included Lucas and her team mate Ella Harris, Grace Anderson (Mike Greer Homes women's Black), Karen Fulton (Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's), Amy Hollamby (Cycle World Fairweathers) and Robertson who had clawed her way to the group.

The nine riders stayed together, working well to build a lead until they once again hit the gorge that saw Anderson and Lucas attack off the front at the top of the climb and establish what was to prove to be the winning move before turning east to have the assistance of a downhill section with the wind at their backs.

Fulton won the bunch sprint to claim third while Kerr came home fifth, behind Smith, losing the elite women's series jersey to Lucas but adding to her lead in the Under 19 classification.

"It was great to back up and make it two round wins in a row and claim the series lead," Lucas said. "I owe my team mates a lot of thanks for all the work they did on the front of the group, just driving our small group that made a selection over the climb the first time, and we just kept driving it and it paid off."

The master's race, contested over three age group categories, saw a number of short lived attacks off the front until it followed a similar pattern of being all together as the riders approached the Rakaia Gorge, but it quickly split up as riders were stretched out on the fast decent and the following climb.

A selection of 20 riders containing all the series leaders and stage contenders pulled clear and stayed together on the westward leg towards Lake Coleridge. There was a crash that disrupted the front bunch saw 45 to 49 series leader and one of the favourites to win the stage, Lee Johnstone (Champion System) and David Rush (Cycle World Fluoro's) fall heavily and not finish the race.

After 41 kilometres of racing Rowlands attacked taking team mates Gavin Mason and Michael Wolfenden and Geoff Keogh (Armstrong Prestige Dunedin) with him. They built up a lead of one minute and forty seconds as they hit Lake Coleridge and turned to head back towards Methven.

Keogh was the first to be dropped from the leading group as a chasing bunch of about 20 riders started to make slow gains on the leaders, eventually catching them as they climbed out of the valley near the Terrace Downs Resort.

Predictable the Rakaia Gorge forced another selection that saw Rewi take a flyer on the decent to get a gap on the field before being caught that then saw Spence attack on the climb with Rowlands quick to react along with Stuthridge, Phil Scott (Kiwi Style Bikes Tours) and Placmakers Brendon Ackeroyd before the pace on the final stages of the climb saw Scott and Ackeroyd fade.

Justin Sims (Armitage Williams) won the bunch sprint, thirty seven seconds behind Rewi, to finish fifth ahead of Ackeroyd and the first 45 to 49 age group rider home, Stuart Lowe (Thule Cycling).

"Mitsubishi just rode fantastic," Rowland's said. "We were always in a break, forming splits and causing gaps so it was a great team effort. It was just me and Warwick really contesting it on the line, and I've got a bit of a bigger jump so got the win."

Rowlands now leads the 35 to 44 classification by 48 points while Johnstone still has the 45 to 49 leader's jersey even though he didn't finish, but Tim Wilson was the second 45 to 49 rider home, finishing seventeenth overall, to move within 10 points of Johnstone's series led while Stuthridge's strong finish consolidated his lead in the over 50's classification.

The final race in the series is at Leeston on October 23rd.

*Ends*

**Compulsory photo credit; Chris Sexton Photography:** *Sharlotte Lucas (Benchmark Homes) won the women's race of the fifth round of the Calder Stewart Cycling Series, the Small Business Accounting Methven Grand Prix, to claim the lead in the series with one race remaining.*

## Results

### Elite men

1	Tim Rush	Mike Greer Homes	Elite	2:17:28.96
2	Reon Park	TotalPOS Solutions	Elite	2:17:29.18
3	James Williamson	L&M Group Ricoh NZ	Elite	2:18:18.04
4	Mike Phillips	Modus Construct	Elite	2:18:23.27
5	Alex Frame	Mike Greer Homes	Elite	2:18:34.21
6	Brett Grieve	PKF Cycling	Elite	2:18:34.30
7	Hugo Jones	Modus Construct	Under 19	2:18:34.34
8	Ben Johnstone	Mike Greer Homes	Under 23	2:18:34.43
9	Hayden Strong	Central Benchmakers-Willbike	Under 19	2:18:34.49
10	Sam Horgan	Mike Greer Homes	Elite	2:18:34.64

### Women

1	Sharlotte Lucas	Benchmark Homes	Senior W	2:40:44.97
2	Grace Anderson	Mike Greer Homes Women Black	Senior W	2:40:45.20

3	Karen Fulton	Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's	Senior W	2:40:53.19
4	Kate Smith	Benchmark Homes	Under 19	2:40:53.27
5	Michaela Kerr	Mike Greer Homes Women Black	Under 19	2:40:53.39

#### Masters

1	Dave Rowlands	Christchurch Mitsubishi	M35-44	2:22:45.40
2	Warrick Spence	Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's Masters	M35-44	2:22:45.82
3	Blair Stuthridge	Protocol Mackleys	M50+	2:22:46.49
4	Glenn Rewi	Christchurch Mitsubishi	M35-44	2:22:47.79
5	Justin Sims	Armitage Williams	M35-44	2:23:24.82
6	Brendan Ackeroyd	Placemakers	M35-44	2:23:25.02
7	Stuart Lowe	Thule Cycling	M45-49	2:23:25.03
8	Gavin Mason	Christchurch Mitsubishi	M35-44	2:23:25.16
9	Michael Wolfenden	Christchurch Mitsubishi	M35-44	2:23:25.17
10	Chris Heywood	Freshchoice Richmond Pomeroy's Masters	M35-44	2:23:25.29

#calderstewartcyclingseries



For more information and full results

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