

SPORTS



Tried and Trew: Jennifer Trew, second from left, won the women's overall omnium title over race leader and former U.S. pursuit champion Annette Hansen, centre, in the 50-lap points race at the Burnaby velodrome Sunday.

Larry Wright/Burnaby Now

The Bell of the 6 Days of Burnaby

First-time Symmetrics club teammates take second annual Madison cycling title

By Tom Berridge

Sports Editor

After six days in the saddle, Canadian individual pursuit champion Svein Tuft and Zach Bell of Burnaby won the elite men's Madison at the Giant Bicycles 6 Days of Burnaby at the Harry Jerome Sports Centre Sunday.

The Symmetrics pro cycling team pairing built up an insurmountable lead heading into the final 100-kilometre race of the 6 Days of Burnaby and cruised to the elite supersprint Madison title, finishing four laps ahead of American teams Cofidis (Kenny Williams and Tyler Farrar) and U.S. national (Cody O'Reilly and Austin Carroll).

Canadian World Cup-bound teams of Cam Evans and Christian Meier, the reigning national Madison champions, and Symmetrics club mates Martin Gilbert and Ryan McKenzie finished fourth and fifth respectively.

The Symme-trics team of Bell and Tuft won six of the nine Madison races during the week-long event despite having not ever ridden as a team before in competition.

Their runaway victory in the team event, included a win on Wednesday, when the duo double-lapped the seven-team field in a 100-km team race that included last year's defending Burnaby 6 Day winner Marsh Cooper and 16-year-old up-and-comer Cody Campbell of Surrey.

Bell and Tuft also lapped the field again in the weekend's first 100-km Madison race Saturday to build up an insurmountable lead heading into the final day of racing.

"The kicker is it is all high intensity. It's all gear up from the first lap," said Bell, following the final race Sunday.

"For us, it's excellent. It's like a points race with a partner. It's one of the best training events you can get. This is what European pros do all year."

Bell specializes in endurance points races that award points for individual sprints occurring within the race."

The Madison, in which teams of riders perform a slingshot manoeuvre to propel their teammate forward in the race, is a favourite of the 100-plus fans that turned out each evening for the second annual 6-Day.

"It's great. It's one of the best spectator events you can have in racing," said Bell, a Watson Lake, Yukon native. "It's the biggest event you can have in racing."

For Bell, it was not the only race of the week. The 24-year-old phenom also had enough gas in the tank to win the 100-lap points race on the final day.

Bell will be heading off to Los Angeles for the next stop on the Track World Cup circuit Jan. 19 to 21.

In the two previous World Cup track events in Sydney, Australia and Moscow, Bell placed in the top 10 in three of four finals.

In November, Bell was eighth in the 30-km points race and 11th in the 40-km individual pursuit Down Under. The following month, he was ninth in both races in the Russian capital.

"If you train for it, it's hard. Still, you don't really train to feel good. You just train to get used to the bad. You'll feel bad, and if you can go fast and feel bad, that's good," said Bell.

In the A group of riders, Scott Laliberte won the group omnium with a second- and fourth-place finish on Sunday.

Laliberte beat out American Brian Nelson, who won the final 80-lap points race, and Burnaby's Jeff Ain who surrendered the overall lead Saturday and faded to fourth overall.

Adam Schwind took top spot in the B omnium in front of junior racer Matt Potma and Burnaby's Gina Grain.

Grain, who lives and trains in Burnaby, recently placed eighth overall in the women's World Cup scratch final in Moscow last month.

The Burnaby Velodrome Club is located in the Harry Jerome Sports Centre at 7564 Barnet Hwy.

- With files courtesy of Chris Reid, Pedal Magazine

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