

**SA Championship Round 2, National BEARS Round 4
& Master of Mac Park
20th & 21st September 2008
Report by Laurie Fox.**

DESPITE the efforts of the weather to present difficulties, last weekend's Master of McNamara Park motor cycle road races went on with the full program completed in good time.

One of the Mount Gambier Motor Cycle and Light Car Club's major annual promotions, the meeting included rounds of the South Australian Championships and the National BEARS (British, European and American Racing Series) contest as well as the prestigious Master of Mac Park and several support classes.

Notwithstanding the very windy and sometimes wet conditions on Saturday, there was a surprisingly good turnout of spectators, this number completely eclipsed by Sunday's throng that filled almost all available parking areas and exhausted the well stocked canteen's food supply long before the finish.

Thanks to the big field of BEARS contestants, including many from far afield interstate centres, and the high standard of riders in the other major classes, onlookers were rewarded with plenty of exciting action with Sunday's track remaining dry throughout.

Even with the rain on Saturday, there were remarkably few falls and no injuries of any consequence.

One local who would have been disappointed was Darren Trotter, unhurt in an early practice tumble but unable to race due to bike damage.

As one of the main pre-meeting workers, Trotter was still kept busy ensuring that the event ran to plan and that all competitors were happy with arrangements.

Both eight lap legs of the main event, the 2008 Dulux Master of McNamara Park, were run on Sunday with a dry track promising and delivering plenty of fast racing.

Quick starter Steve Leach from Adelaide made the most of his fast getaway in the first leg and led for five laps but, firstly, with 2006 winner Karl Schmidt from Mildura hot on his tail for three laps and young local David Trotter going remarkably well just behind.

As the race progressed, Adelaide's Graham Snaith gradually moved up from an early fifth to take the lead on lap six and draw away from Leach with Schmidt and Trotter right behind.

Looking set for second, Leach unfortunately dropped his bike on the s-bend just before the end of the seventh lap, bringing Schmidt and Trotter up to second and third with Chris Panayi next.

Although there was no likely problem with the rider obviously not injured and his machine clear of the track, the Clerk of the Course ordered the red flag to be displayed before riders could complete their eight laps and the placings were declared as at the end of lap seven.

Despite Leach being out, the second leg was full of excitement, particularly with Trotter flying the start to lead and defying the efforts of Snaith, Panayi and Schmidt for three laps until Snaith finally managed to get by and gradually draw ahead.

Trotter, in a great display, held second right into the final lap only to have his front brake let him down at a critical moment, dropping him to sixth behind Snaith, Panayi, Schmidt, Graeme McLaren and Stephen Millar and making Snaith a delighted overall winner of the 2008 title.

While conditions were extremely windy on Saturday, all but the very last of the practice and qualifying sessions were run over a dry track only to have a heavy shower set in just before the start of race one, the first of the four legs of the BEARS events with a full field of 20.

First away and quickly setting up a good lead, Panayi was almost out before completing a lap, his 675 Triumph losing grip as he entered the finishing straight and going through gyrations that would have unseated most riders before Panayi was able to regain full control and speed on to victory, making sure not to be caught out again.

Riding a similar machine, Dean Holmes came through for a sound second but never far clear of Hartwell's Jon Collins on a 450 KTM, Ducati rider Glen Bauder, local club member Neil Macartney, Fergus Gibson and Jonathon Riley and 12 other finishers.

Also run on Saturday, the second leg brought another clear win for Panayi from the hard charging Holmes, Collins, Bauder, Darren Lewis, Macartney, Riley and Gibson.

Just as much at home on Sunday's dry track, Panayi again finished leg three ahead of Holmes, Gibson, Riley, Kerr, Bauder and Collins with Trevor Williams next ahead of Macartney, all close enough to take advantage on any possible error by those in front.

Capping off an impressive effort, Panayi led all the way in leg four, holding off the equally impressive Holmes who was closely followed in by Gibson, Riley, Kerr, Lewis, Collins, Williams and Macartney.

With 18 of the original 20 completing all of Sunday's races, the high percentage of finishers was a credit to the BEARS riders and the good preparation and reliability of their machines.

First of the South Australian Championship classes, the combined Superbike and Supersport rounds ran over two legs, one each day.

Riding a 600cc Honda, Schmidt led Saturday's event throughout with local Trotter going great guns on his 600 Suzuki for second while Adelaide's Snaith on a 1000 Yamaha and Leach with a 1000 Suzuki disputed third, Snaith finally successful.

Obviously happier on Sunday's dry track, Snaith trailed McLaren for four laps before moving past to score, McLaren eventually finishing fourth behind place-getters Leach and Schmidt.

The Pro-twin and Superstock classes also ran together over two legs.

With a wet track, Saturday's first leg brought an apparent all-the-way win for Trotter over Adelaide's Stephen Millar, Mount Gambier clubman Dave Van Hoof, Michael Lawrie from the Adelaide Phoenix club, and BEARS rider Gibson.

Unfortunately for Trotter and Lawrie, both were disqualified for using wet racing tyres when the rules for superstock stipulate standard road pattern, leaving Millar as the winner.

Showing that using the permitted tyres was no problem, Trotter and Lawrie finished first and second in Sunday's race with Millar a close third ahead of Paul Radford from the Cafe Racer Club and Van Hoof.

Another championship class with one leg each day, the unlimited solo category was minus a few riders for various reasons but still produced plenty of keen and fast action.

Leach was a clear winner of Saturday's event while McLaren and Victorian Paul Coleman gradually wore down early second Snaith who finished fourth ahead of Hartwell's Nathan McKenzie and local Mick Engberg who fell on the last corner but quickly remounted.

Snaith was never in doubt in Sunday's dry track race while Leach and Schmidt tussled closely to finish in that order ahead of McLaren, McKenzie and Engberg.

There was a good field for the period four and five machines which had four events, two on each day with the last for its own Master of Mac Park trophy.

Michael White came through to win race one from early leaders Jeff Britton and Chris Pash and then went on to win race two from Pash, Sean Kelly and Wally Ryan and race three from Pash, Richard Metcalf, Ryan and Kelly.

The special "Master" event went to Britton in a tight finish with White, the two clear of Pash, Metcalf and Kelly.

The 125cc championship riders ran concurrently with a special "Limited Solo" class but for separate awards.

Levi Day was a fraction too good for Jack Wright in all four 125 events while in the “Limited Solo” class, race one went to Collins from Macartney and Kelly, races two and three to Macartney from Collins and Ryan, and race four to Collins from Macartney and Pash.

There were three events for period three historics and older model 125s with talented Adelaide woman rider Mandy Beales taking the hat trick on the Koistra prepared 350cc Honda formerly ridden by Bill Horsman, now retired.

Richard Metcalf and Brett Rose were second and third in race one with veteran Trevor Henderson heading the 125s while in race two Metcalf and Joe Ahern filled the placings and in race three Ahern, who had been plagued with minor troubles on his Norton, was second ahead of Metcalf.

A special race for a “Master” trophy on the second day saw Ahern rewarded for his patience with a win over Beales and Metcalf.

Two consolation races for riders who nominated for the “Master of Mac Park” but who were balloted out were dominated by the local 125s of Day and Wright with Collins, Mick Engberg and Macartney next in race one and Macartney, Collins and Engberg in race two.

With many classes combined and a number of sub-classes, the fully detailed official results will be included in next week’s report.

TURNING to a different sphere, arrangements for the Mount Gambier Motor Cycle and Light Car Club’s upcoming All Sorts Motorcycle Rally on October 18 and 19 are well in hand together with many inquiries and promise of support from a large number of riders and several groups including the interstate Honda CX-GL club.

Planned as a social event to provide motorcyclists with the opportunity to enjoy the company of their fellow enthusiasts at the legendary McNamara Park road racing circuit, a great area with good facilities, including hot showers and spacious clubrooms, the concept has aroused considerable interest from rally minded riders.

The grounds will be open on the preceding Friday for early arrivals and, in addition to providing plenty of space for those wishing to camp, the pit sheds will be available to shelter enthusiasts and their bikes as well as being available to sleep in for those who travel light.

The rally is open to bikes of any type and age and can be ridden to the event or brought along on a trailer or similar for display.

Other features will include the big historic photo display, including many shots of local scrambles, trials and road races not previously seen, a fun quiz night in the clubrooms and a Saturday afternoon ride to nearby coastal areas.

Entry forms are available now at all local motorcycle shops and anyone seeking further information should contact Colin Thompson on 08 87 25 5421 or 0417 855 436.

Entries can also be posted to Thompson at 11 Lindsay Street, Mount Gambier, 5290.

WHILE last weekend's Master of McNamara Park road race meeting was without doubt a most successful event, for many much of the shine was dulled by the absence of the Mount Gambier Motor Cycle and Light Car Club's popular president, Dave Atkinson.

Unfortunately plagued for several years with a manageable but difficult and painful back problem, Atkinson suffered a resurgence of the affliction in the weeks preceding the race meeting and, although seeming on the mend after several days in hospital, was still unable to attend the event that he had spent much time in organising and to which he was looking forward.

His presence at the after race presentations was much missed and everyone connected with McNamara Park is looking forward to seeing him in action again and extend their best wishes for his best possible and speedy recovery.

COMING EVENTS

October 25th	Ride day – McNamara Park – 10 am till 4 pm
November 29th	Ride day – McNamara Park – 10 am till 4 pm
December 26th, 27th & 28th	McNamara Park - South Australian Historic Championship
February 28 th	Ride day – McNamara Park – 10 am till 4 pm
March 6 th , 7 th & 8 th 2009	McNamara Park - Hartwell Club Championship
March 28 th	Ride day – McNamara Park – 10 am till 4 pm
April 10 th , 11 th & 12 th	McNamara Park – Easter Road Races

For more information please visit www.macpark.org