

Motor Sport

by Laurie Fox

THERE was plenty of action at last weekend's two days of road racing at McNamara Park when the Mount Gambier Motor Cycle and Light Car Club held its annual Easter Cup event and a round of the 2005 national BEARS (British, European and American Racing Series) championship.

With ideal weather, conditions were perfect for fast racing and the competitors responded by turning on some of the closest contests seen for many meetings.

In the important Easter Cup and combined superbike, supersport and thunderbikes races, the four outstanding competitors were recent Hartwell winner John Tuchyna on his 1000cc Kawasaki, Karl Schmidt with a CBR1000 Honda, popular former Master of Mac Park winner Michael Brenton on a 1000cc Cagiva and up and coming Warrnambool contender Ashley Roe with another CBR1000 Honda.

Held on Saturday, the combined open class saw Tuchyna never headed in both six lap heats but with little room for error with Schmidt right behind closely followed by Brenton and Roe in race one while in race two, with Brenton a non-starter, Schmidt and Roe filled the placings.

The same four were obviously the ones to beat in the two eight lap Easter Cup races on Sunday although there were several others going very well and ready to slip into the placings should any of the more fancied falter.

Once again, Tuchyna led both events from flag to flag, lapping just a fraction under the track record, and adding the 2005 Easter Cup to his collection.

Right on his tail in race one, the place action continued with Schmidt holding a close second while Brenton had his hands full contending with Roe who moved up to third on lap three but had to yield to pressure from Brenton again on lap six.

Showing even more fire in the second race, Brenton did all he could to hold on to Tuchyna's tail but, even so, soon had Schmidt closing in as well and looking set to take second only to fall with just two corners to go on the last lap, leaving Brenton second clear of Roe and Adelaide's James Van Rooyen on a 1000 Aprilia.

Although there were five categories in the BEARS events, formula one, two and three machines ran concurrently in one event while the formula four and five models combined for another strong field.

Each group had four races and no class could have been more closely fought than the group headed by formula one.

Interstate rider Philip Gray from Penrith showed terrific speed with his 998 Ducati in race one, holding Brenton's Cagiva at bay through out the six laps and then repeating the dose in race two while Van Rooyen, Craig White and Steve Hayr battled out the minors.

Continuing the battle on Sunday, Brenton just managed to keep ahead of Gray in heat three, the two often side by side right to the finish followed by Van Rooyen and White.

Gray tried hard in the final heat, leading for three laps before Brenton found a way past and went on to score with Hayr third.

Using the tie break rule, Brenton took the formula one honours from Gray on equal points.

In the slightly smaller formula four and five field, races one and two went to Hartwell's Jon Collins from John Buckeridge, both on KTM's, but it was Buckeridge who scored in race three from Adelaide Ducati pilot James Jay while popular local Andy Baird gave them all a surprise in race four, bringing his Ducati home ahead of Buckeridge and Collins.

Full details of all final BEARS class placings will be included together with all other official results in next week's report.

The tight action continued in the four race 125cc GP class where Tim Inkster and Rudi Muller from Adelaide were both keen to score with their identical brand new RS125 Hondas while Mount Gambier's Daniel Cutting was out to keep them honest with his slightly older model.

All races were virtually the same with Inkster just able to hold on for four narrow wins despite Muller often drawing level in every race but just not able to hit the front.

Cutting also went remarkably well, never more than two or three seconds behind for third.

The three leaders streeated the rest of the field where local juniors Aaron Rigby and Levi Day enjoyed some good tussles with Stephen Fuss and Joe Ahern from Adelaide.

The period five historic machines scratch races brought three different winners, local Jason Coulson, Scott Elliott and Rick Zakelj with Zakelj going on to win the six lap Easter Cup race for the class.

After winning all three post-classic scratch races from John Scanlon, Keith Campbell and Joe Ahern, Graeme Fisher had the tables turned on him in their Easter Cup race when Scanlon took the lead with two laps to go leaving Fisher second ahead of Ahern and Campbell.

The period three classics were dominated by Campbell who won the three up to 500cc events from Brett Metcalf and the allpowers Easter Cup from Ahern and Metcalf.

The small superlight and historic 125 races rounded off the program with Melbourne's David Gazley winning the first three races before bike troubles left race four to Mick Sandley.

Several of the BEARS riders from New South Wales had not raced at McNamara Park before and said at the prize giving that they were most impressed with the track, the organisation and the improvements being carried out and would look forward to coming to Mount Gambier again.

Also impressed with the organising club's work, several riders donated their prize money back to the club to assist with the redevelopment.

The next road races at McNamara Park will be the annual seniors event on the 14th & 15th of May.