

Motor sport By Laurie Fox.

THERE may have been no Master of Mac Park contest at last weekend's Easter Cup road races at McNamara Park but Warrnambool's young rising star, Ashley Roe, once again showed his masterly ability around the Mount Gambier track, taking out the eight lap Open Easter Cup, the five round up to 1000cc modern bike class with five straight wins, and, thanks to a little luck, the formula one BEARS class.

In the modern bikes, two firsts on Saturday set Roe well on the path for further success and, thanks to some overnight modifications to improve the handling of his Honda CBR1000, Roe was even more impressive on Sunday, never headed in either the modern bike class or the main feature race.

Riding a 999cc KTM Duke for the first time in the BEARS event, Roe had to settle for two good seconds behind the superb 1000cc MV Agusta of series leader Sydney's John Allen on Saturday and seemed set for a similar result in Sunday's first race when Allen, in a most uncharacteristic happening, fell when clearly ahead on the last lap and handed the win to Roe.

Unable to finish, Allen had to start from the rear of the grid in the final race and did well to finish third, leaving winner Roe with sufficient points to take the round overall.

With an excellent entry of around the 100 mark and the benefit of ideal weather, racing was top class on both days and much appreciated by the strong turn out of spectators each time.

While the revised program of less classes but with more starts for all competitors was without doubt a successful move, it did tend to see more than a few non-starters in some of the final events although the major categories were still well supported.

While a number of riders did manage to tumble off during the two days, there were no serious injuries apart from those sustained by champion veteran Bill Horsman from Adelaide who made a very rare error in Saturday's second period three race after an impressive win in race one.

Taken to hospital for treatment, Horsman was found to have a broken shoulder and ribs but says he will be back in action again as soon as recovered.

Another rider who collapsed in the pits after finishing a race was found to have suffered a bee sting, to which he is allergic, during his event but was otherwise unhurt.

With 23 starters, Saturday's first up to 1000cc modern bike race saw Roe jump straight into the lead but keenly chased by Shane Clark from Hartwell on a 1000 Suzuki and Adelaide's Daniel Mutton with a 1000 Honda while Michael Blunden from the Cafe Racer club looked a threat with his 1000 Yamaha but fell on the second lap and dropped to the tail of the field.

Riding very well, Mutton moved up to second at half distance but was no match for Roe who scored comfortably with Clarke third followed by a hard fighting group of local club members Graeme McLaren, Darren Trotter, Nathan Bell in his first 600 Honda ride, David Trotter, Darren's son on a 600 Kawasaki, Craig White on a 999 Ducati and 14 more headed by Andrew Ord from Hartwell.

Back in the saddle uninjured, Blunden gave Roe a real run for the money in race two, sticking close on every lap and only just behind at the flag.

Clarke was third with Portland's Bell very impressive fourth followed by Mutton, Darren Trotter, McLaren, White, David Trotter and Ord, all in a keen group and swapping places from time to time.

In Sunday's first race, Roe showed that his overnight suspension changes were worth the effort and moved further ahead on every lap to win clearly from Clarke, Mutton, McLaren, Darren Trotter, Bell, Adelaide's Shane Southern and David Trotter while race two challenger Blunden dropped out on the first lap and was not seen again for the rest of the meeting.

Roe repeated his performances in the next two events, winning race four from Mutton, Clarke, McLaren, Bell, Darren Trotter, Ord, and David Hall from Hartwell, and race five from Mutton, McLaren, Darren Trotter, Bell, Ord, Clarke, who made a slow start, Hall and David Trotter with 18 finishers in all of Sunday's races.

The combined period four and five class also brought a big field of more than 20 to the line each time with almost all finishing every one of the four rounds.

From qualifying Jeff Britton with his TZ350 Harris and Shane Zakelj on a 992 GTS Ducati looked the ones to beat and so it proved to be.

Zakelj set a cracking pace in race one to lead for two laps but with Britton gradually closing to move ahead at half distance and take the win over Zakelj with local Andy Baird third all the way on his 900 Ducati but only just holding off clubmate Alan Smith with a 1000 Suzuki and another hard battling pair in Malcolm Haines from Adelaide and his Atujara clubmate Brett Metcalf.

In almost a repeat, race two saw early leader Zakelj again worn down by Britton with Baird and Smith next followed by local Jeff Feast, who was seventh in race one on his 750 Honda, Paul Walker on a 350 Yamaha and local clubman Barry Millard with a 500 Honda.

Britton made no bones about it on Sunday, winning both heats, albeit narrowly, from Zakelj.

Baird was third in race three ahead of Smith, Haines, Metcalf and Walker while in race four, Joe Ahern from Adelaide, not seen in the earlier races, nosed Baird out of third with Haines next ahead of Metcalf, Smith and Feast.

The period two and three classics and historic 125s had a much smaller field, even more so after the first race on Saturday where veteran champion Bill Horsman from Adelaide used his skill and the speed of his 350 Honda to hold off Victorian Brendan O'Neill's impressive G50 500cc Matchless while Joe Ahern brought his 750 Norton into third ahead of Metcalf on a Gold Star BSA, Justin Snedden on a Trick Motolite and local Michael Skeer enjoying the run on his Manx Norton 500.

A quick start in race two saw O'Neill narrowly ahead of Horsman for two laps and looking good, the two clear of Ahern, Metcalf and Skeer.

Seeming anxious to move past, Horsman tried a difficult passing move at water tower corner but apparently locked his front wheel and connected with O'Neill, bringing both down together.

This left Ahern in front from Metcalf and Skeer with these placings standing although the race was red flagged a lap short while the fallen riders and machines were attended to.

Sunday's first race brought victory for Ahern over Snedden, Metcalf, Skeer and veteran enthusiast Ken Lucas while race four saw O'Neill back in action, his damaged machine made race worthy and finishing second behind Ahern and just ahead of Metcalf, Snedden and Skeer.

The 125cc Grand Prix bikes ran concurrently with an assortment of machines loosely described as Formula Mac Park and including super motards, 250cc GP models, production bikes and others.

Jeff Britton squeezed his TZ250 GP Yamaha ahead of early race one leader Mark Wilkinson's 125 after two laps and went on to score narrowly from Wilkinson, Adelaide's Tim Inkster on a 125, local Levi Day on a similar model, Chris Collins from Adelaide on a Yamaha 450 super motard and local Jack Wright on the Dave Atkinson sponsored 125.

Finding a way past the quicker starting bigger machines at the first corner, 125 exponents Inkster and Wilkinson were first and second throughout in race two, followed home by Britton, Day, Wright, Brett Metcalf on a CR500 Honda super motard and Collins.

Inkster and Wilkinson repeated the dose in Sunday's first race with Day getting up to make it a 125cc one, two and three ahead of Britton, who only just made the line clear of Wright, Collins and Stuart Garner on a TZ250 Yamaha GP model.

In Sunday's second race it was the 125s of Inkster, Wilkinson, Day and Wright ahead of Britton, Collins, Garner and Ryan Seaman from Adelaide on another 125 while, in the last of the five rounds, a quick start saw Wilkinson keep his 125 just ahead of Inkster's at the flag followed by Britton, Day, Wright and Collins.

Turning to the two BEARS groups, the first for formulas one and two, saw series leader John Allen from Sydney soon take his 1000cc MV Agusta past quick starter Ashley Roe on a KTM Duke, the two drawing clear of Craig White on a Ducati, Fergus Gibson with a KTM Duke, Jon Collins on a similar model and Dean Evans with a 675cc Triumph while early third Phillip Gray and Mike King both ran off in separate incidents and dropped out.

Allen was never headed in race two with Roe a solid second clear of White while, a little further back, Evans and Gray had a ding dong duel, finishing virtually side by side clear of Gibson and Jon Iles.

Looking set for another win in Sunday's first race, Allen led into the final lap only to drop his machine at pine tree corner and leave Roe to take the flag ahead of Gray, White, Gibson, Collins and Iles while Allen was unable to finish.

With Allen forced to start from the back of the grid in race four, Roe had a clear run to finish safely ahead of Gray while Allen did well to come through for third ahead of White, Evans and Gibson.

The formula three, four and five BEARS ran concurrently with a good field of 15 for their four races, all won by Shane Zakelj on his 992 Ducati, although not without challenges from Jeff Britton, Mike Myers and Jason Lorenz.

In race one, Britton finished right on Zakelj's tail with Myers third ahead of Fergus Gibson, Justin Snedden and Lorenz while in race two Britton dropped out after a lap in third leaving Myers to fill second followed by Jon Collins, Snedden, David Aboud on a Husaberg and Scott Brown with a Ducati.

Myers gave Zakelj no peace in Sunday's first race but had to settle for a close second while Lorenz made up good ground for third ahead of Collins, Snedden and Gibson.

Lorenz, Myers and Snedden were second, third and fourth throughout in race four followed by Stuart Garner and Aboud.

In the preliminary scratch race for sidecars, locals Stephen Jones and new passenger Ricky Pycroft held off a strong challenge from Adelaide's Neville Lush and Martin Scott, with David Jones and Rodney Howell well back in third followed by Mark Bond and Paul O'Brien, and Fid Pitt and Graeme O'Neil.

The outfits then had four handicap races due to the wide variety of machines.

The first brought a close finish with David Jones just ahead of limit man Pitt, scratch rider Stephen Jones, Lush and Bond while, with Lush a non-starter, Pitt won the second from David Jones, Stephen Jones and Bond.

Bond won the third from David Jones, Pitt and Stephen Jones while Lush dropped out when looking a sure place-getter on the last lap.

In the fourth handicap, Pitt scored again from Bond when David Jones went out with minor bike trouble while Stephen Jones, looking the winner with a lap remaining, unfortunately slid off the track on the s-bend, losing too much ground on the leaders and finishing third.

The Easter Cup races wound up the program.

A disappointing field of only four started in the Laurie Fox Easter Cup for period three classics, Joe Ahern winning from Brendan O'Neill, Brett Metcalf and the 125 enthusiast who never misses a Mac Park meeting, Trevor Henderson from Adelaide.

There was a much bigger field of 24 for the period four and five post classic Easter Cup with Shane Zakelj capping off a most successful weekend to score from the ever persistent Andy Baird, Ahern, Metcalf and the full field.

The Easter Cup solo consolation went to Mark Wilkinson from Levi Day and Jack Wright while Stephen Jones took out the sidecar cup from father David Jones and Mark Bond.

In a fitting conclusion to a great weekend of motor cycle road racing, Ashley Roe dominated the eight lap Open Easter Cup for modern bikes, holding top Adelaide rider Daniel Mutton safely at bay while Graeme McLaren just managed to head Darren Trotter for third after a race long battle with Andrew Ord also well in the picture.

With visiting riders coming from as far as Sydney and Queensland as well as Adelaide and Melbourne, the Mount Gambier club was again congratulated at the awards presentation for a top event on a track that is becoming more and more popular.

Following a practice and ride day on April 28, the next road races at McNamara Park will be the over 45s seniors meeting on May 12 and 13.

With many classes run concurrently, the full official detailed results of the Easter Cup meeting will be included in next week's report.