

New to racing? Welcome. This might help.

Race One - 40km Graded Scratch, Eyreton

What's a Graded Scratch? The race is split into groups of racers with roughly the same ability so you race against just those, not against everyone.

How do I pick my Grade? For races One and Two you can self-select. Most riders who select A or B grades will do so because they are experienced. For those new to racing D grade is the traditional starting point. If you're pretty fit then you could try C grade or but if you're unsure of yourself select E or F.

What sort of course is it? Flat, nearly flat. No hills, just three laps of the block. Sometimes the wind makes life interesting. Or the rain.

How do I do well? Firstly, by staying safe. Take time to learn how to ride in a racing bunch. Secondly, by racing your race. Winning is great but rare. It's a numbers game, most racers don't win. You can enjoy yourself just as much by using the race to push yourself; test your fitness by riding on the front more than you have to; test your racing strategy by reading the course and picking when to make a move, follow a move or let a move go knowing that it is doomed; or save your energy for the sprint.

Ok, but I want to win. At Eyreton there are two ways to win; a breakaway or in the sprint. If trying to break away you could just ride off the front but that would suggest you picked the wrong grade. Normally it means picking your moment and attacking, hopefully taking one or two others with you to share the work. If you want to win the sprint you'll have to save your energy during the race, risking that someone else might break away and spoil your fun. That's the beauty of the sport.

If nothing else, you'll get a great workout. And a chocolate biscuit.