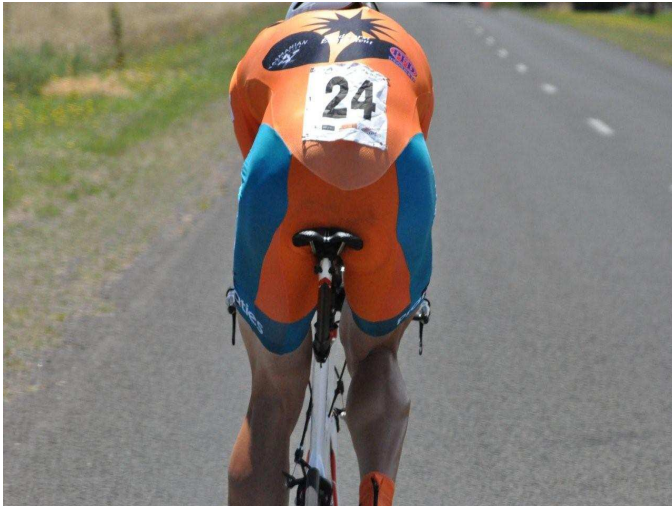


National Championships Wrap Up

If the start of the season is anything to go by the Genesys Wealth Advisers Cycling Team are in for a big year. The National Championships held in Ballarat from the 6th – 10th January are always strongly contested with domestic and European based riders all keen to get runs on the board early and don the National Champion Jersey which these days commands considerable respect on hallowed roads of France and Belgium.



Time Trial

Nathan Haas set the ball rolling for the team managing a strong 4th place in the U23 TT on Wednesday. It is Nathan's first year with the team; he has already fit in well and should be a great asset. Andrew was following Nathan in the TT and is confident there is a lot of improvement to come. "Nathan's lines through the corners aren't brilliant plus he tends to get out of the saddle far too much and gets bogged down in a big gear at times, but the boy really knows how to hurt himself." Ben Grenda and Ben Grieve-Johnson also achieved solid results with 9th and 19th respectively.

Will Clarke and Dylan Newell were our sole representatives in the senior TT and didn't disappoint with Will narrowly missing the podium mirroring Nathan's 4th while Dylan managed 8th. Both boys left nothing in the tank and gave their all. Will's improvement in the TT discipline is nothing short of incredible. Will was 27th last year more than 6 minutes behind the winner. This year Will was only 1.14 off the pace and has already said next year he will settle for nothing less than a medal.

criterium

The U23 Criterium was another close affair with Ben Grenda riding a great race to finish 4th. Ben was cagey enough to amass enough sprint points throughout the race to claim the sprint jersey as well.

In the senior Criterium we were represented by Will Clarke, Joel Pearson, Dylan Newell and Kyle Marwood. The boys were going to have a tough time of it though as with previous Tour De France green jersey winners in Robbie McEwen and Baden Cooke in attendance the race was going to have to be fast and aggressive for anyone to have a chance. Will ended up escaping with a small group, eventually building enough of an advantage to lap the entire field. In the sprint Will managed 3rd and gave the team its first podium of the Championships and the year.



Road Race

The U23's were the first up in the much anticipated road races. The favourites were basically all from the dominant National Jayco Skins squad and they didn't disappoint filling the entire podium. Ben Grenda and Nathan Earle road strong races but in the end the heat and Jayco Skins numbers meant they had to settle for 10th and 11th on the day. After Nathan's 4th place last year he was disappointed but is highly motivated for the rest of the season.



Photo: ©Shane Goss



Photo: © Shane Goss

In the senior race it was a tale of the one that got away. In the first lap a group of 19 riders went up the road with five never to be seen again. With only Will, Dylan and Joel on the start line we had to be very careful to ensure that we were there when it mattered. Normally in this type of race an early break is allowed some latitude and is then reeled in with a couple of laps to go before the hitters pour on the pressure and fight it out for the win. The problem was that with such a big group away most teams either had a rider present or didn't have the firepower to chase.

With four laps remaining Joel hit out in an effort to cause a reaction in the main field and hopefully catch what remained of the early break. This move resulted in a number of small skirmishes until a group containing Will eventually rode clear but were unable to catch the front group. Travis Meyer soloed to a great victory followed by David Kemp and Damian Turner. Will finished 9th with Dylan and Joel 33rd and 39th some 11 minutes down.

All in all it was a very pleasing championship. The team rode as a strong cohesive unit and were competitive all week. Will Clarke has without doubt the most consistent results of any rider over the championships and is looking forward to racing the Kiwis at the Tour of Wellington later in the month.