

2012 - My Maiden Karapoti Win

Palmerston North's Mat Waghorn surprised all and sundry with a classy win at Karapoti Take-2. This is his blog.

After finishing the racing season on a reasonably good note, it was time for another fun race: The "Karapoti Take Two". The original Karapoti two weeks earlier was cancelled due to the weather bomb that swept the country, so the onto-it organisers made another race, quick smart! It was a good idea, for all those who had entered and done all that training, and still wanted to see how they went. Despite the weakened field, it was still a good day out, and the weather played its part! I had already entered, so decided I might as well make my season a week longer.

The MacDermids were kind enough to give me a lift, and a brake! (Not break, brake). The morning of the race, the pin holding my brake pads snapped, so when I put my wheel in at 6am I didn't see the pads come out the top. So when I pulled my brake crap hit the fan. Or oil hit my disc anyway.

Paul quickly chucked a spare Magura brake in (off his bike) and I just hoped the cable would be long enough! (He rides a small bike). By tying the cable to the top tube, it was just long enough! Even if it looked pretty average, and felt even worse on the DH!

At the start I just sat on someone until we hit the gorge. Then Dave Sharpe and a couple of the Bushlove lads jumped in front, so I jumped onto their tail. By the end of the gorge there was a group of six of us, Gavin McCarthy and a couple of others had jumped on as well.

When we got to the Warm Up climb, Dave jumped on the front and started to push it a little. I was sitting on him really comfortably and jumped in front just before the top. I had a little gap going into the downhill, but Dave caught up again before the first big climb, I had to take it real easy on the downs with my brakes being different than what I was used to. I could barely reach Paul's brake!

Up Deadwood I just sat on the front setting what I thought was a solid tempo without pushing too hard. Turns out it was enough to get a gap, so I put a little burst in over the undulating section at the top, just to make sure I had a good lead into the Rock Garden.

It was quite muddy this year, despite perfect weather on the day, so the Rock Garden was really sketchy. The drops were quite easy but the rest was loose and wet as. It was weird riding with no one around! Last

time I did it, I was 14 and did a 3:15! But I got to the bottom with only a couple of minor bumps off the walls, and it was into the Devils Staircase.

By this time I was well out of site of the others, so that was in my advantage. I pushed, rode and ran at a good pace up the climb, quite often riding stuff that I honestly thought I was going to have to hop off on! At the top I still hadn't heard anyone else, so I sat just below a tempo pace for the following flat'ish section, and took it reasonably easy on the down, without going too slow!

On the last climb up Dopers Hill I knew this would be where I'd either blow and lose it, or have it won by the top. I went at it quite hard to make sure I stayed out of sight. I think my mind was playing games with me, though, because I kept hearing noises but every time I checked there was no one coming.

I was feeling pretty good and managed to hold the same pace to the top, except for the last 500m or so when my bike decided it was chain-suck time. Knowing I was near the top I backed off a bit because I didn't want to risk snapping my derailleur. At the top I tried the big ring and it seemed ok, so with no one in sight behind me I knew Karapoti was mine and pinned my ears back on the downhill and then went to TT through the gorge to the finish line.

I crossed in a time of 2:29, a big 45min PB ;).

This was my 5th time riding Karapoti, starting from age 11. So it was awesome to win it! I always looked up to the winner as a young fella, thinking he was pretty cool. So it was great to step onto the top step.

Cheers Once again to Raisey's Nutrition; got me through the tough times. Thanks to Paul for letting me borrow his brake! And once again a big thanks to everyone who has supported me this season, and my sponsors; Team Pedal Pushers, Wheelworks (for the mean wheels!), Raisey's Nutrition, Kenda Tires, Life Nutrition NZ and Roofing Industries. Time for a couple of weeks off the bike, before build up for an American/Canadian Campaign! Watch this space.

