Cyclocross report 2022

For those new to the club and competitive cycle sport, cyclocross is an off-road discipline raced mainly on parkland circuits which can include a wide range of natural features. We are affiliated to the Wessex Cyclocross league, the cyclocross season runs from September to the end of February, points are awarded for finishing positions in individual races and used to give each rider an overall position in their age group at the end of the season. The Wessex league is one of the strongest in the country and regularly attracts over 500 riders to each fixture. Each fixture is made up of age group racing for boys and girls throughout the day this starts with U10 and U12 racing, for fifteen minutes, U14 and U16 races, for thirty minutes. Older age groups O40, O50, O60, O70 men and women race for 40 minutes and seniors race for 60 minutes. Small groups of riders compete at National and International level in British cycling and Masters O40+ competitions.

To support club members off-road riding and racing we offer a regular Wednesday evening drop-in training session which is very well attended by Venta riders of all abilities. We currently use Farley Mount country park, and now have permission to use Strawberry Lane sports field and Hunter Park in Twyford for organised training sessions.

The 2021-22 cyclocross season was very successful for the club. We finished the season with some excellent performances in all age groups at Regional, National and International level. In the Wessex league we achieved some of our best overall results so far. Second overall youth and O50 team Pedro Hutchinson and Malcolm Cross won the Junior men and O60 categories respectively. David Spencer was 4th overall in the O40 category and several other riders achieved top ten positions overall.

A highlight for older members the club last season was the world Masters championships held in Ipswich. Several riders competed; David Spencer finished 6th and Jorge Manso19th in the O40 category, David Martin was 22nd in the O60 category and Malcolm Cross 7th in the O65 category.

The star of the weekend for VC Venta however was Lydia Gould (seen on the left) who won the gold medal in the O65 category. Lydia has been a successful sports woman for over 45 years having been a long-distance road and fell runner, which included winning the IOW marathon and finishing second in the London to Brighton Road race. Frequent injuries prompted a change of sport, it wasn’t long before Lydia was a successful elite mountain biker and cyclocross rider. Winning the O40 world cyclocross championship, numerous 24-hour mountain bike races and setting a ladies Southdown’s way double record in 2008. Her most recent achievements have come after recovering from a hip and partial knee replacement.

The 2023 season is in full swing with five races remaining in the Wessex league which has retained its usual high numbers of riders and competitive nature. I am glad to say that we have had good numbers racing across all age groups from U8 all the way up to O70. Keep an eye on the Venta Facebook page and the weekly Venta newsletter for up to date information.

Pedro Hutchinson has been getting closer to the top 20 in the Junior men’s category at the National Trophy series, this is British Cycling’s premier cyclocross event and attracts fields of 100 riders. David Spencer has finished tenth in the O40 race.

Two riders Malcolm Cross O65 and Chris Hutchings O55 raced in the European master’s championships held in Namur Belgium. This is one of the most iconic and challenging cyclocross courses in the world and did not disappoint. Despite heavy rain both riders successfully completed their respective races Malcolm coming home in 10th and Chris in a huge field of riders achieving 22nd