



Media release

March 24

Daniel Whitehouse loses appendix but wins Le Race title

Christchurch rider Daniel Whitehouse has won Le Race cycling classic by a stunning six minutes after leading the 100km race from Christchurch to Akaroa from the first climb.

In the women's event, young Dunedin rider Ella Harris surprised red-hot favourite Kate McIlroy on the final straight and also claim the race record.

Whitehouse had been tipped as the man to beat on the hilly course, but the 23-year-old had played down his chances after having his appendix removed only four weeks ago.

"Losing my appendix clearly got me on a perfect climbing weight," laughed Whitehouse who was leading the race at the Sign of the Kiwi and never looked back.

"It was a long, lonely day, and I had to keep going hard to keep warm," reflected the featherweight rider on the cold, damp Canterbury riding conditions with much of race taking place in the clouds.

The peloton broke up in the first few kilometers after Christchurch veteran Paul Odlin set an early pace on Dyers Pass, but after Odlin punctured, Whitehouse suddenly found himself in front on his own.

"I was looking back and the whole peloton was fanning out, so I thought 'right, this is me."

Whitehouse's concerns that he may have blown too much energy if the following group would catch him before the Hill Top climb, proved unfounded as his pace was too hot to handle and continued to increase his lead all the way to Akaroa.

The young rider showed he had bounced back from his surgery and was ready to challenge for the Tour of Thailand next week.

Nearly six minutes behind Whitehouse, Sam Horgan again had to settle for second place like in 2017 after a long, fruitless two-man chase with Andrew King. He did manage to hold off last year's winner Brad Evans who had closed in to less than 100 meters on the finish line.

In the women's race Ella Harris could not believe her eyes when she spotted Kate Mcllroy in the final descent.

"I had nearly given up, but at the top of the final climb I spotted her down the road in her distinct red top," said the 19-year-old who found the wheel of a fellow Dunedin rider in a chasing bunch to catch Mcllroy in the main street of Akaroa.

"I am not sure if she even noticed me in that bunch until the last moment, so I think I surprised her on the finish line," said the student who claimed the \$500 bonus from Harcourts Holmwood by breaking Charlotte Lucas' race record in 2hr58min09 sec, as well as the \$500 winner's cheque. "That's great for a student's bank balance."

Harris said she has been beaten by Mcllroy in a recent race in the Calder Stewart series, "but I knew I'd have a chance on hilly course like this."

Behind the elite riders, nearly 700 recreational riders completed their personal battles in teams or individually, on tandems and mountainbikes, for the full 100km or the shorter version, Le Petite, which finishes in Little River, and was won by Michael Sanders.

2018 Le Race results:

Men's results:

1	DANIEL WHITEHOUSE	02:41:05.793
2	SAM HORGAN	02:47:03.423
3	BRAD EVANS	02:47:05.077
4	CAMPBELL PITHIE	02:47:15.817
5	AARON WYLLIE	02:47:32.957
6	ARI SCOTT	02:48:05.867
7	HAYDEN ROULSTON	02:48:06.637
8	KEES DUYVESTYEN	02:48:29.550
9	MICHAEL VINK	02:48:36.370
10	BEN OLIVER	02:48:36.580

Women's results

1	ELLA HARRIS	02:58:09.187
2	KATE MCILROY	02:58:09.480
3	HENRIETTA CHRISTIE	03:15:09.333
4	RACHEL THOW	03:16:18.820
5	KIRI ATKIN	03:18:50.773
6	REBECCA KINGSFORD	03:20:30.027
7	RENEE WOOTTON	03:21:20.103
8	SARA HARNETT	03:23:48.973
9	ERIN DOWNIE	03:24:17.770
10	FIONA HUMPHESON	03:24:27.660

Caption 1: Daniel Whitehouse is miles ahead of the rest of the field as he claims Le Race 2018.



Caption 2: Ella Harris beats Kate McIlroy (in red) on the line to win the women's race.



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