

## Triathlete wins memorial handicap

Liam Green is the talk of the Footscray Cycling Club after taking out the coveted Hugh Cram Memorial Handicap.

Riders gathered at the Little River Cricket Club to contest race six of the winter road season, but this event had some extra meaning.

The race is held to honour Cram, a man who joined the club in 1939 and served it for 50 years, including time as president. Cram was made both a life member and club legend and was also a life member of Cycling Victoria and elevated into its hall of fame posthumously.

Five bunches of riders set off to contest 80 kilometres of hard racing on the deceptively difficult Flinders Avenue circuit around the base of the You-Yangs near Little River.

The handicap format required each bunch of riders to co-operate and push themselves to the limit to keep the chasing bunches at bay. The gun riders of scratch started out with a 24-minute deficit to make up over limit.



Fastest time winner Dominik Dudkiewicz and overall winner Liam Green with their spoils after the Hugh Cram Memorial Handicap. (FCC)

By lap four, after sweeping up 2nd scratch, it was clear that scratch were not going to catch the bunches up the road, likewise the middle-markers rode a lonely race.

It was the smooth, experienced, 2nd limit who seized the day, reeling in limit – a few of whom managed to hold on and contest the

sprint, including first female finisher Diane Edwards – and powered along, staying a full five minutes clear of the chasing bunches.

It was 27-year-old Melton resident Liam Green who took the sprint for the overall win from Martin Oroszi and Brad Clapham.

Club champion Dom Dudkiewicz took out the fastest time five minutes later.

Green, who started racing with the club in 2017, made the transition from triathlon to cycling to keep fit in the off season.

He was thrilled with his bunch of riders. “My bunch worked really well today,” he said.

“We rode a really consistent tempo that we could all cope with, communicated really well, listened to the advice the experienced guys kept delivering and that really helped me big time.

“At the end I jumped as late as I could ... I left it to the last minute today and it paid off well.”

Mark Micallef



## IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ While the AFL has its Look of the Game group pounding over ideas and suggestions to make our great game more pleasing to spectators, the world game will take centre stage for the next month with the World Cup in Russia. At its best, soccer is a game of precise skills, beautiful and fluid, with speed, guile and more than enough action. At its worst, like any game, it is stilted, defensive, boring and ugly to endure. While the Socceroos are not expected to go too deep into the competition it does not detract from the World Cup as an event or a spectacle. It is a perfect opportunity for the round ball game to recruit players and spectators and build for the future.

■ The Look of the Game is a big issue and while it is good not to have it as the elephant in the room, I do have concerns that go straight to grassroots level. The consensus is that the elite level game is not good to watch. Congestion is killing the pace and leading to the game, which was invented for big grounds, being played on a postage stamp. Strangely, we are teaching kids to play the AFL way. Every elite coach builds game plans on defence, yet to get drafted, kids are encouraged to rack up possessions, boost their stats. At AFL level their coach continues his defence mantra and chasing kicks is against team rules. Confused? The AFL is looking at introducing zoning and I am leaning that way too. It will bring positional play back into the game – one on one contests. The alternative is to coach and build game plans for positions, not zones.

■ Gary Ayres has all the football boxes ticked – multiple premiership player and coach, dual Norm Smith Medallist, over 250 games at the highest level, state representation, club captain, best and fairest winner – you name it, he has achieved it in football. The reigning VFL premiership coach spoke pre-game before his Port Melbourne team dismantled Werribee last Saturday at Avalon Airport Oval. His future in football after this season is certainly up in the air given his answer to my question ‘How much longer do you want to continue?’ I hope he remains in the game at VFL level because he understands the challenges of competing with no AFL alignment and as such, no AFL money.

■ Local footy returns after the bye weekend.

Kevin Hillier

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Charlie Hudson-Czerniecki is preparing for her first overseas competition. (Damjan Janevski)

## Teen takes next step

By Lance Jenkinson

Half of the battle can be above the shoulders for Werribee Victorian Clay Target Club star Charlie Hudson-Czerniecki.

When Hudson-Czerniecki is calm and focused, she can deliver world-class results, as evidenced by her first international event earlier this year, when she reached the final at a Junior World Cup event in Sydney.

“It is a tough sport,” she said. “My heart rate goes through the roof in competitions.

“I see a sports psychologist and he’s helped me learn to control the mental side of things.”

In the days leading up to the Sydney event, Hudson-Czerniecki said she was racked with nerves.

It is the same for her at most competitions because the anticipation builds and she wants to shoot well.

Once the Sydney competition arrived, Hudson-Czerniecki was amazingly composed.

She was the surprise packet on day one of the two-day event, finishing the first day in pole

position. In the final, she only missed out on a medal by one place, but it was a big thrill for her just to feature in the final.

“I had the time of my life, it was such an experience,” Hudson-Czerniecki said. “I was just consistent and ended up being one point ahead by the end of the qualification rounds.

“I went in first in the final and that was an experience I’ve never had before.

“I was struggling a bit [in the final], but I ended up coming through and finishing fourth, just missing out on a medal, which is upsetting, but I didn’t expect anything more.

“It’s my greatest accomplishment yet, I just hope there’s many more to come.”

Now Hudson-Czerniecki has shown what she can do in a big-time event against international competition, the bar has been raised.

The 19-year-old has been invited to the next Junior World Cup event in Germany later this month.

It will be the first time that she has travelled overseas, let alone for a competition.

She is comforted by the fact she will be

travelling with an Australian team that gets along well with one another.

Her Werribee teammate Alexis Preston will also be in action.

“We always train together and travel,” Hudson-Czerniecki said.

“I’m glad I’ve got her coming over with me.”

Hudson-Czerniecki will fly to Germany with confidence.

“There were some great shooters in Sydney, but this is going to be another notch up, so I don’t know how I’ll go,” she said.

“I hope everything comes together – the physical and mental side.

“I want to compete at my best and be consistent.”

Hudson-Czerniecki has been shooting since she was introduced to the sport at the age of 14 by her dad.

Her shooting career has kicked on since her arrival at the Werribee Victorian club.

“They’re really supportive of me,” she said.

“All the committee members are great and ... they’re like family to me.”

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