

Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic 2015

OCTOBER 17



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A RICH HISTORY CONTINUES

BY ROD MORRIS

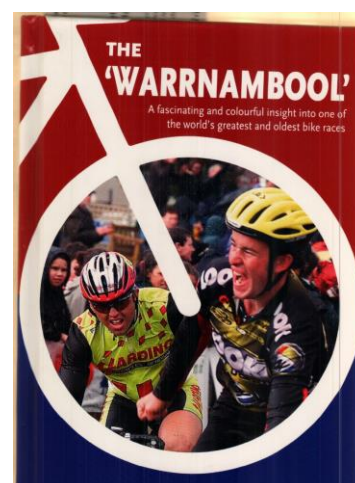
IN the recently launched history book of the Lakes Oil Melbourne to Warrnambool, renowned sports author, John Craven, highlights many wonderful tales of past classics.

Whilst acknowledging the 99 former champions, Craven also pays tribute to the 20,000 or so other riders who started in at least one “Warrny.”

“*The Warrnambool*,” published by BAS publishing is a concise history of Australia’s most famous bike race.

Craven has the opportunity to add another chapter this weekend with the 100th running and 120th anniversary of “The Warrny.”

A capacity field of almost 300 riders will grace the start line at 7.30am.....how many reach the finish line in Warrnambool by mid-afternoon remains to be seen, thus adding more history.



Three former “Warrny” champions are scheduled to ride tomorrow, including the popular Tim Decker, formerly of Bendigo, but now living in Adelaide and working as a Cycling Australia track coach.

Decker was successful in 2007 at his 14th attempt, relegating the disappointment of finishing third 1999 and second a year later.

New Zealander Samuel Horgan came close as anyone ever has of winning back-to-back Melbourne to Warrnambools.

He won in 2013, beating Queenslander Jack Anderson and New South Welshman Jacob Kaufmann to the finish line.

Last year, Horgan fell just short of further success, finishing third behind Oliver Kent-Spark (Victoria) and Alex Edmondson (South Australia).



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Decker (#128), Horgan (#35), Kaufmann (#33), Kent-Spark (#1) and Edmondson (#100) are all listed to ride this weekend, as are two other former podium placegetters, Victorian Mark O'Brien and Tasmanian Tom Robinson (#20) who were second and third respectively in 2010, a race won by NSW rider Rhys Pollock.

Three former champs back for more –

TIM DECKER

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SAMUEL HORGAN

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OLIVER KENT-SPARK



2007

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2013

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2014

At the time of writing, the weather forecast for the 2015 “Warrny” was full of mixed predictions. According to Elders Weather, the starters should be able to dodge some clearing showers with a 20 degree heat, but a potential South-Westerly wind of around 11 km/h.

Later in the afternoon as the field nears Warrnambool, the temperature is expected to drop slightly, while the wind will increase to around 26km/h and will be basically straight in the rider’s face.

Since the Melbourne to Warrnambool underwent a major face change in 1996 by moving from handicap bunches to a mass graded start, the race times have varied as much as the weather has.



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Victorian Jamie Drew recorded a fastest time of 6.09.57 for the 1996-2014 period, whilst still acknowledging Dean Woods' 5.12.26 set in 1990 as the quickest in history.

In that modern day period (1996-2014), the "slowest" winner has been William Walker in 2004, hitting the finish line in 7.59.22 in tough conditions.

The average winning time over the last 19 years has been 7.05.53, a mark race organisers are tipping for this weekend although "Mother Nature" may play her role in the race yet.

Updated weather forecast –

In Werribee Saturday: Clearing showers, maximum 20 degrees celsius; 11km/h winds SW; 20% chance of rain.

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In Warrnambool Saturday: Mostly sunny, maximum 17 degrees celsius; 26km/h winds SW; 30% chance of rain.

NB: courtesy Elders Weather

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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