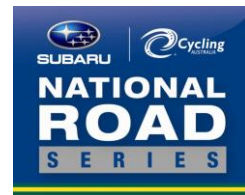


# 2016 TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST

August 10 – 14



August 14, 2016

Words: Shane Goss / @licoricegallery

## CROME COLLECTS TOUR VICTORY IN PORTLAND

Twenty-three year-old Bendigo rider, Sam Crome, has seen off all challengers to take out this year's 2016 Lakes Oil-Fulton Hogan Tour of the Great South Coast in Portland today. Crome took an advantage of just eleven seconds over the ACT's Benjamin Hill (Lakes Oil) into the final stage criterium but held on to win the tour by that margin from Hill with Crome's Avanti Isowhey Sports teammate, Ballarat's Patrick Shaw, a further seven seconds back in third place.

Crome was never far from the front of the peloton on the final day and was a relieved man when crossing the line to win his first stage race in the Subaru National Road Series. Under the guidance of team-manager, Andrew Christie-Johnston, who has now won the tour four times out of the five times it has been held, and without their number one sprinter, Anthony Giacoppo, who withdrew before the race began due to injury, Crome managed to take the tour lead on the second stage in Mount Gambier and hold on until the finish in Victoria's oldest European settlement.

"It's my first ever tour win and to stand on the top step is pretty dam cool", he said after the win. "We only got back from Europe last week, so to come here and defend from day one, it just goes to show the strength of the team". "Crome crashed on day three of the tour and missed what could have been a race turning break on the penultimate stage in Cape Bridgewater. "It's definitely a massive relief" said Crome. "There were times when I thought it was all over yesterday but I felt good today".

Crome has finished on the podium just once before in a Subaru National Road Series race and won a stage of the Tour of Japan earlier this year in May. "I've never been in this position before but I had the best team to help me do it", added Crome. "I knew I was in the best hands possible".

It's the first time for Crome in Avanti colours and after a very short break he will now head to Victoria's north for the Tour of the King Valley.

The final stage criterium on the scenic waterfront circuit was keenly contested and a fitting finale to the tour. While whale spotting occupied the nature enthusiasts nearby, sports fans were treated to plenty of action on two wheels.

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After nine laps of the thirty lap race, three riders managed to form and get a gap on the peloton. Instigated by Mobius Future Racing's Robert Stannard, he was quickly joined by SASI/Callidus's Harry Carpenter and Jayco John West/VIS's Angus Lyons. The trio opened up a break that extended to nineteen seconds on the short 1.6 kilometre circuit, however with the strong Avanti outfit controlling proceedings back in the peloton; it appeared their efforts would be to no avail.

Carpenter had much to gain from the break, he went into the final stage 12 point behind Campolina Sprint Points leader Cyrus Monk (Pat's Veg Cycling), however Monk missing the break, enabling Carpenter to capitalise and clean up the intermediate sprint points to eventually win that competition by 14 points.

With the peloton closing in on every lap, the leaders dug deep to hang on. Lyons rode into the CFMEU Rising Star award leader's jersey with his efforts on the stage and at one point was only 17 seconds behind the tour leader on the road.

The charging peloton left their run late and Stannard saluted to give New Zealand their second stage win of the tour. He won in a race time of one hour 7:02 from Inform Racing's Scott Sunderland with Carpenter holding onto third. "I wasn't sure if we were going to stay away or not" Stannard said after the race. "Our plan was just to hit it as hard as we could and we just held on." It's the first time the seventeen-year-old student from Palmerston North has raced in the series.

The Scody King of the Mountains competition was won by Kiwi Ryan Christensen with 24 points from Cyrus Monk (Pat's Veg Cycling) on 11 while the Campolina Criterium Championship was won by Sunderland on 26 points from Carpenter on 18.

Monk was awarded the Westvic Resource Management, Gordon Hotel & Porthaul Most Aggressive rider of the tour and Avanti Isowhey Sports took out the teams' competition on the general classification. The Subaru National Road Series continues with the San Miranda Tour of the King Valley beginning this Friday.

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