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Attention Sports Editors

Oceania Cycling Championships – Day 4 Wrap

The Beijing Olympic medal winning team pursuit set the track alight with a brilliant performance on the final night on the track at the WHK Oceania Cycling Championships in Invercargill tonight.

The quartet of Wes Gough, Sam Bewley, Marc Ryan and Jesse Sergent smashed the New Zealand record on the way to winning the men's 4000m team pursuit at the ILT Velodrome.

They clocked 3:58.689 which was more than a second faster than they achieved at the track at the national championships prior to the world championships earlier this year.

The women were not left behind with a new combination, without world individual pursuit champion Alison Shanks, also establishing a new national record in winning the final of the 3000m team pursuit. The trio of Kaytee Boyd, Lauren Ellis and newcomer Rushlee Buchanan clocked 3:26.658 to beat off the New Zealand No 2 combination.

"It's great. I'm really pleased with the men's performance because the guys are still feeling the effects of the Tour of Southland," said BikeNZ national track coach, Tim Carswell.

"We targeted 3:58 tonight and also wanted them to go under the three minute mark for 3km and they achieved both. I'm pleased that they managed to hold on well in the final lap.

"It sets us up quite well for Melbourne next week where I'd like to think we have the chance to go quicker."

It's the third fastest time that any New Zealand team pursuit has recorded, with only their two rides at the Beijing Olympics faster.

Earlier the women's trio of Boyd, Ellis and Buchanan impressed in clocking 3:26.658 to win the women's title impressively. It is the fastest time recorded in New Zealand and just over two seconds slower than their silver medal winning performance at the world championships.

"It's a very positive result with a new line-up and the first time we've lined up at an international event without Alison Shanks," said BikeNZ national women's track coach Dayle Cheatley.

"It was a chance for us to play around with some new combinations and see how fast we can go without the world champion.

"The result was pleasing. It's all about progression for our women's team pursuit programme and there's a group of six or seven riders now all of international quality. That's quite exciting."

Cheatley said they were well set-up to develop especially if the women's team pursuit is added to the programme for the London Olympics.

Earlier the Australian combination of Annette Edmondson and Emily Rosemond took out the women's team sprint ahead of the youthful Auckland pair of Henrietta Mitchell and Stephanie McKenzie, who broke the national under-19 record in the process.

Australia also won the under-19 team sprint and the under-19 4000m team pursuit.

Australian Joel Leonard held on to take out the elite men's keirin final in an exciting battle, just holding out world junior champion Sam Webster and fellow kiwi Simon Van Velthooven.

The championship concludes with the road races in Gore tomorrow.

Full results: www.bikenz.org.nz