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Attention Sports Editors

Hutchings makes most of “lucky break” in PowerNet Tour of Southland

Perth-based kiwi Logan Hutchings had consigned himself to water boy before a “lucky break” led to victory in stage three of the PowerNet Tour of Southland today.

Hutchings (ColourPlus) out-sprinted a five-strong break on the 165km stage from Invercargill to Gore via Edendale and Riversdale with the peloton zooming home close behind.

There was no change to the yellow jersey with all the major contenders finishing in the bunch leaving Heath Blackgrove (Waimate, Zookeepers – Cycle Surgery) leading by 14 seconds to Jack Bauer (Nelson, Share The Road), Marc Ryan (Timaru, ColourPlus) at 24 seconds and Jeremy Vennell (Hastings, Bissell Pro Cycling) at 29 seconds.

After the catastrophe of yesterday with nearly half of the field caught in a major crash, today’s stage was without incident in stunningly still conditions.

Hutchings found himself out of contention after yesterday’s chaos, leaving him with the role of supporting his team-mates, Olympic medallists Ryan and Jesse Sergent (Feilding) who are both high up on general classification.

However he took his chance with 15kms to go as a break of five riders went clear of the peloton including Paul Odlin (Christchurch, Calder Stewart), Wade Mangham (Rotorua, Ascot Park Hotel), Jason Barlow (Invercargill, PlaceMakers) and Jonathon Atkinson (Auckland, Energy Smart).

They swooped on solo leader James McCoy (Christchurch, Benchmark Homes) before Hutchings came off the third wheel on the final corner to kick home for the stage win.

“It’s my first stage win in New Zealand and it is always great to win at home,” Hutchings said.

“It was a lucky day in the saddle really. I was carrying out the job as bottle boy for most of the day but managed to get into a lucky move. We got a few seasons on the pack and that’s all that is needed sometimes to go clear.

“We worked pretty well together to stay clear and managed to hold off the peloton.”

Hutchings, who has been riding out of Belgium this year, is looking forward to a break after this week following eight months of solid racing.

“All my joints are saying stop. But I’ve got a week to go. This is a lot of fun though to ride in a team with your mates.

“The stage win is great for me and the team. But tomorrow it is back to carrying the biddons and supporting the boys who are right up there on GC.”

Earlier a break involving McCoy, Ben King (AUS, Calder Stewart), Mark Langlands (Cambridge, Calder Stewart) and Cody O’Reilly (USA, Bissell Pro Cycling) went clear after 35kms. They built their lead to 4m 40s, to enable King to claim the yellow jersey on the road. They stayed clear until King and McCoy kicked away on Otama Hill with 26kms remaining. McCoy then edged away from King before he was swallowed up by the key break nearing Gore.

The fourth stage is 88.4km from Invercargill to Tuatapere from 9am and stage five in the afternoon is 102km from Tuatapere to Winton starting at 1.30pm.

Full information: www.tourofsouthland.com

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Who is PowerNet?

For nearly 100 years the owners of the PowerNet managed networks have provided a safe, efficient and reliable electricity distribution network to the people of the lower South Island. PowerNet was established in 1994 by network owners Electricity Invercargill Limited and The Power Company Limited to develop, manage and maintain their electricity network assets in Invercargill and Southland.

PowerNet provides the same services in North, South and East Otago on behalf of OtagoNet Joint Venture; in Stewart Island on behalf of the Southland District Council; and in the Frankton area of Queenstown on behalf of Electricity Southland Limited. PowerNet is the equivalent of the fourth largest network company in New Zealand, delivering electricity to around 65,000 consumers.