



Press Release
(For immediate release)
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Vennell in yellow jersey

Dominating the sprint finish in stage one of the 2011 PowerNet Tour of Southland saw Ascot Park Hotel's Clinton Avery avenge a "one inch loss" he suffered last year.

After enduring 160km of energy-sapping crosswinds, the Rotorua rider held off a strong challenge from the chasing group to claim the win in Lumsden.

"Long, hard, miserable – that pretty much sums up that stage," he said. "Once we got in those valleys, it started to channel the wind a bit more so we had to toughen up a little bit.

"I got second here last year by about one inch to (Hayden) Roulston so it's nice."

Motivated by Tour veteran Gordon McCauley, of Barry Stewart Builders-GMC, an early breakaway group of nine riders was left to its own devices and managed to rack up a lead of nearly 8 minutes by the halfway mark.

After remaining largely unreactive for the majority of the stage, the peloton dug deep and successfully reeled them in with just over 20km remaining, prompting a final group of six to strike out for the finish line.

"It started to come back pretty quickly when we stepped on the gas," Avery said.

Calder Stewart's Jeremy Vennell was thrust into yellow with the powerful team content to share the coveted jersey amongst its ranks.

"It's a really nice surprise. I wasn't expecting to be in yellow after today ... I was just lucky enough to get in the move at the finish," Vennell said.

"I think we're looking really good, we're staying in touch with the rest of the competition and we'll bide our time right to the finish."

Dunedin's Joe Chapman, riding for Creation Signs-L & M Group Racing, proved unstoppable in all four hillclimbs to secure the Hydralink/Jesco King of the Mountains jersey.

"It wasn't the plan but I saw an opportunity there and thought 'why not'," he said.

Share the Road's Chris Macic, of Auckland, snatched the Harcourts Sprint Ace from McCauley, while George Bennett, of Nelson, earned the Co-Operative Bank under-23 jersey.

In the overall stakes, just 25 seconds separates the top 10 riders with Vennell's time of 4hr 30min 35sec giving him a narrow two second buffer over Subway's Paul Odlin.

In the team classification, Calder Stewart has a 24sec advantage over Pure Black Racing with Subway just three seconds further adrift.

Known to give some riders nightmares, the notorious Bluff Hill Climb looms tomorrow – a stage Avery won in 2006 but has been extended in this year's revamped Tour route.

"It's going to be a bit different now it's over 130km as opposed to 80km. It's daunting if you just ride straight up it without doing anything beforehand so chuck in 127km before it and we'll see what happens," Avery said.

Vennell predicted "a bit of carnage ahead" with today's stage depleting the legs.

"Tomorrow you'll see some suffering for sure," he said.

Ends

Results from Stage One of the 2011 PowerNet Tour of Southland, 160km from Invercargill - Thornbury - Ohai - Mossburn - Lumsden

1. Clinton Avery (APH) 4h25m56s; 2. Paul Odlin (SUB) ST; 3. Scott Lyttle (PBR) ST; 4. Jeremy Vennell (CST) ST; 5. Andi Bajc (STH) ST; 6. George Bennett (KMT) at 02s; 7. Daniel Barry (PBR) at 22s; 8. Patrick Bevin (APH) at 22s; 9. Shane Archbold (PNT) at 22s; 10. Justin Kerr (STR) at 22s; 11. Brett Tivers (STR) at 22s; 12. Joseph Lewis (KMT) at 22s; 13. Tim Gudsell (PBR) at 22s; 14. Ryan Obst (RDS) at 22s; 15. Karl Murray (STR) at 22s; 16. Mike Olheiser (JPW) at 22s; 17. Peter Latham (SUB) at 22s; 18. Wade Mangham (APH) at 22s; 19. Matt Wheatcroft (MCP) at 22s; 20. James McCoy (HCL) at 22s; 21. Greg Taylor (UHM) at 22s; 22. Hayden Roulston (CST) at 22s; 23. Chris Macic (STR) at 22s; 24. Jeremy Yates (STR) at 22s; 25. Westley Gough (SUB) at 22s;

Overall Standings

1. Jeremy Vennell (CST) 4h30m35s; 2. Paul Odlin (SUB) at 02s; 3. Scott Lyttle (PBR) at 03s; 4. Clinton Avery (APH) at 16s; 5. Hayden Roulston (CST) at 21s; 6. Marc Ryan (CST) at 21s; 7. Andi Bajc (STH) at 23s; 8. George Bennett (KMT) at 24s; 9. Shane Archbold (PNT) at 25s; 10. Josh Atkins (PNT) at 25s; 11. Chris Macic (STR) at 28s; 12. Daniel Barry (PBR) at 29s; 13. Tim Gudsell (PBR) at 29s; 14. Louis Crosby (PBR) at 29s; 15. Glen Chadwick (PBR) at 29s; 16. Shem Rodger (PBR) at 29s; 17. Peter Latham (SUB) at 30s; 18. Westley Gough (SUB) at 30s; 19. Nick Lovegrove (SUB) at 30s; 20. Patrick Bevin (APH) at 33s; 21. Wade Mangham (APH) at 33s; 22. Brett Tivers (STR) at 34s; 23. Justin Kerr (STR) at 34s; 24. Karl Murray (STR) at 34s; 25. Jeremy Yates (STR) at 34s;

Team Overall

1. Calder Stewart 13h32m26s; 2. Pure Black Racing at 24s; 3. Subway Pro Cycling at 27s; 4. PowerNet at 34s; 5. Ascot Park Hotel at 36s; 6. Share The Road at 01m01s; 7. Kia Motors at 01m11s; 8. H&J's Outdoor World-Avanti Plus at 01m13s; 9. Mico-Protrain Cycling Team at 01m22s; 10. Radio Sport at 08m01s;

Sprints

1. Chris Macic (STR) 24; 2. Gordon McCauley (BSB) 15; 3. Brad Evans (OCL) 12; 4. Clinton Avery (APH) 9; 5. Oliver Harding-Sheath (PTL) 6; 6. Myron Simpson (PNT) 5; 7. Aaron Strong (APH) 5; 8. Peter Latham (SUB) 5; 9. Mark Langlands (OWA) 4; 10. Joseph Lewis (KMT) 3;

King of Mountains

1. Joe Chapman (CSL) 24; 2. Tom Hubbard (HCL) 12; 3. Aaron Strong (APH) 10; 4. Chris Macic (STR) 2;