

Press Release
(For immediate release)
November 2, 2011

PowerNet riding in memory of 'camp mother' Tess



Motivation isn't hard to find for the PowerNet team in this year's Tour of Southland – it only takes a quick glance at the name Tess etched on their race kit.

A valuable member of the PowerNet team, Tess Van Dijk, 42, lost her year-long battle with cancer in July.

Cyclist Shane Archbold said embroidering her name on the team's kit was a fitting tribute to the passionate cycling fan.

"She was such a big part of the team. I've only been riding for PowerNet the past two years so my involvement is only a small feature of what Tess did both for our team and the company," he said.

"She did pretty much everything for us last year – she did our washing and ordered our food from the supermarket. She really camp-mothered us for the week and it was a bloody good idea to remember the role she played by adding her name to our kit.

"It makes us very proud to wear it and when that first stage win comes, it will definitely be good for PowerNet and I'm sure all their staff will appreciate the tribute."

Team-mate Tom Scully came frustratingly close to achieving the team's inaugural stage win when he dominated the 48km stage from Riverton to Tuatapere yesterday morning.

"We thought we should have someone in the break today so I put my hand up for it and decided that's what I wanted to do – get in the break, make it stick and try and ride out the stage finish," he said.

"Coming into the sprint I dropped my chain with 150m to go – it was in the big ring and then it just fell off when I started sprinting. What do you do? You can't get too angry because it's not going to change the result."

Scully said Van Dijk was certainly missed by the riders.

"She worked hours and hours for us and always made sure we had enough goodies and treats in the cardboards at the house to keep us all fuelled up. She did set a very high standard last year and the boys have been struggling a little bit without her this year," he said.

"It's nice to recognise her in a special way."

PowerNet business manager Lyn Daly said the riders' decision to wear Tess' name was a reflection of the high regard she was held in.

"Before she passed away, Tess even purchased green and black socks for the boys to wear so they were comfortable after each stage. Instead of putting their slippers on, they now put their socks on," Daly said.

PowerNet's extensive involvement in the Tour for over a decade can be credited to Van Dijk.

"She was the driving force behind PowerNet being the main sponsor," Daly said.

The Tess Van Dijk Award presented after each stage of the Tour went to Scully in Te Anau yesterday.

"The awards are about courage, determination and showing a bit of tenacity even when things are down. Tess was really determined and she would never give up – even during her battle with cancer," Daly said.