

THE PIONEER

MTB STAGE RACE, SOUTHERN ALPS, NZ

11 February 2017

For immediate release from The Pioneer Mountain Bike Stage Race, further information at www.thepioneer.co.nz

- VNR including vision of the jet boat crossing, stage and overall winners crossing the finish line and interviews with stage and overall winners is uploaded and ready for use, Daily Highlights, Images, Press Release, Course Maps and more [CLICK HERE](#)
- Free to use editorial images attached, showing overall winners James Williamson (I) and Scott Lyttle post-race; Kate Fluker and Mark Williams crossing the line; Open Women's runners up Sujon Thermatech Ingrid Richter (I) and Erin Greene and winners Reta Trotman (I) and Nina McVicar. credit: Neil Kerr/Pioneer
- Further images are available in the drop box

KIWIS PREVAIL IN EPIC PIONEER MOUNTAIN BIKE RACE

New Zealand's James Williamson and Scott Lyttle (Team Watson & Sons Manuka Honey) took out the 2017 Pioneer Mountain Bike Stage race, holding off the fast finishing Spaniards Tomi Misser and Ibon Sugasti (Imparables) on the final stage into Queenstown today while Nina McVicar (Nelson) and Reta Trotman (Christchurch) in team Hirepool took out the women's honours.

In a race that has already established itself as amongst the best in the world and with a truly international field, with 17 countries represented by a total of 154 riders, there were emotional scenes as the winners and those further down the field rode into Queenstown to greet family, friends and hundreds of supporters celebrating their achievement.

Team Imparables crossed the line first but were in reality never a chance of making up the more than twenty minutes they needed to catch the Kiwis, with Alexandra's Williamson and former Masterton based rider Lyttle following soon after to a

rapturous welcome at the Queenstown Events Centre, having completed the 545km in just under 27 hours.

The final stage was notable for the inclusion of a bonus normally reserved for tourists to the Queenstown region, a jet boat ride across the Kawarau River. With the course changed from last year, riders were loaded aboard one of two jet boats for a neutral zone trip to the other side, where they disembarked and rode the remaining kilometres to the finish line.

Lyttle loved every minute of the week and the chance to turn back the clock to his mountain riding days, before he enjoyed a successful pro road career.

“This has been amazing, I have loved the whole week, the course, the people, the other riders, it is an incredible event and we are thrilled to win it after a great battle with the Spanish riders throughout the week.

“The reason I really wanted to do this race was after seeing so many of the photos last year, I wanted to see the scenery but to be fair, I didn’t – my eyes were either full of sweat or looking at the terrain we were riding over, but looking back it was amazing and this country of ours is phenomenal for sure.”

Williamson was quick to point out that no part of the week was easy for the champions.

“This is pretty special, a really special and tough race, there are no easy days out there and every step of the way we were battling and just to make it here today is something special, this could be something new for us. I want to thank our supporters for getting us through the week, most importantly my wife Bridie who has looked after us all week, there are so many other people but also Watson and Son Manuka Honey, they are great supporters of us and we are grateful to have them on board.”

The Spanish gave it their all but were ultimately not able to find the minutes they needed on the final stage into Queenstown today, winning the Masters 40+ category but finishing second on general classification.

“This is an amazing week, I think we enjoy it very much. Maybe not the terrain because we have the hard tail bike, but we try to push all the way in the race to arrive at the finish line alone and today we do this,” said Misser.

“In Spain many people will see our TV show of this race and it is on Youtube (Imparables) as well so everyone can see this, people in Spain but also people in New Zealand. Ibon and I have a great time, we are very happy to be here in New Zealand and we enjoy it very much.

“We go to South Africa next for the Cape Epic, but for now we will rest and try to arrive in good condition.”

Team Hirepool Nina McVicar and Reta Trotman (NZL) were dominant all week in the Open Women’s category, and crossed the line to a great ovation.

“To be honest I was pretty afraid coming into this, real afraid,” said Trotman. “But I think the fun exceeded my expectations, we just had so much fun and clicked together every day and the whole event was just magic. I was fearful of the distance, the mountains and what my legs were going to do. The legs are good but it is more the spirit that gets you through on a stage race like this, and for that I have to thank Nina.”

Perhaps the most popular of the teams to reach the finish line was the local Queenstown combination of Mark Williams and Kate Fluker, Team New World backed up to win their second Open Mixed title.

“I am really pleased, I wasn’t sure what to expect coming into this week, just having a good time with Willy (Williams) though it seems to bring the results, it was awesome,” said Fluker.

Williams was beaming from ear-to-ear after another victory and the end of a grueling but hugely satisfying seven days.

“We are both quite competitive so when the starting gun goes you give it all you’ve got, but we were pushed hard all week by the North American Freakshow team (Sonya Looney and Gordon Wadsworth). It has been great, Kate has been a rocket as usual, we have had a good old time, who knows, Cape Epic next maybe?”

Former World 24-hour champion Sonya Looney (CAN) was gracious as she crossed the line, with her first acknowledgement being one for the other riders in the field, all 338 of them representing 17 countries in total.

“It has been an amazing experience, spending time with all the people from this part of the world in this amazing race, and having such gracious competitors and challenging ourselves too. And Gordon was a wonderful team mate, I want to thank him so much.”

The many other finishers to earn a medal and the shout out of ‘Pioneer’ as they crossed the line included former Formula One driver Alex Yoong (Malaysia) who rode with Auckland friend Anton Morgan; former Olympic sailing medalist and America’s Cup sailor John Cutler who rode with fellow sailor Cameron Dunn in the Salty Sea Dogs and 2007 World Championship gold medalist rower Carl Meyer and his riding partner and fellow former rower Sandy Mowat.

Everyone who made it to the finish in Queenstown today though received a wonderful welcome and a deserving congratulations from event organisers, family and friends after taking on and conquering an event that is already amongst the very best mountain bike stage races in the world.

7-Day-Epic
Stage Seven, Snow Farm to Queenstown
69km, 1,451 metres elevation

Full results [CLICK HERE](#)

Open Men

- 1 Watson and Son Manuka Honey, James Williamson & Scott Lyttle NZL, 3:13:01
- 2 Power Systems Consultants, Stephen Butler & Phil Murphy, 3:27:30
- 3 Seven Day Adventurists, Phil Walter & Adrian Reteif, NZL, 3:35:13

Open Women

- 1 Hirepool, Nina McVicar & Reta Trotman NZL, 4:08:28
- 2 Sujon Thermatech, Erin Greene & Ingrid Richter NZL, 4:12:23
- 3 Amy and Haley, Haley Van Leeuwen & Amy Hollamby, NZL, 4:29:50

Open Mixed

- 1 Team New World, Kate Fluker & Mark Williams NZL, 3:42:12
- 2 Freakshow, Sonya Looney & Gordon Wadsworth USA, 3:57:32
- 3 Dated Loaf & Pikelet, Rob Garden & Marquita Gelderman, NZL, 4:27:01

Masters 40+ Men

- 1 Imparables 2, Tomi Misser & Ibon Zugasti ESP, 3:12:34
- 2 222 Racing, Chris Clark & Gary Hall NZL, 3:30:54
- 3 Blue Dog, Mike Holland and Reuben Brand, NZL, 3:45:03

Masters 40+ Women

- 1 Cable Logging Geraldine, Kylie Burrows & Sarah Kaehler, AUS, 4:58:34
- 2 Dumb and Dumber, Annie Cooper & Delia O'Malley NZL, 5:26:08
- 3 Peak Flow, Karolyne Dunn & Cath Wilson, NZL, 6:01:00

Masters 50+ Men

- 1 Centaur, Paul Muldoon and Grant Tyrrell, NZL, 3:56:08
- 2 Sniffer and the Rampant Ferrett, Paul Riordan & Stephen Davies, AUS, 4:02:58
- 3 Crisis What Crisis, Greg McWhannell and Peter Lockwood, 4:10:40

Masters 60+ Men

- 1 Canadian Eh, John Cockburn & David Lech, CAN, 5:35:19
- 2 On the Rivet, Kevin Dobbs & Bruce Whale, NZL, 6:20:37
- 3 Powered by Pinot, Mark Moores & Andrew Gordon, NZL, 6:21:52

The Pioneer Mountain Bike Stage Race

7-Day-Epic

General Classification – Final Results

Overall General Classification

Men

- 1 Watson and Son Manuka Honey, James Williamson & Scott Lyttle NZL, 26:42:56
- 2 Imparables 2, Tomi Misser & Ibon Zugasti ESP, 27:02:27
- 3 222 Racing, Chris Clark & Gary Hall, NZL, 28:39:22

Women

- 1 Hirepool, Nina McVicar & Reta Trotman NZL, 33:01:38

- 2 Sujon Thermatech, Erin Greene & Ingrid Richter NZL, 34:05:51
- 3 Amy/Haley, Haley Van Leeuwen & Amy Hollamby NZL, 34:52:14

Category Results

Open Men

- 1 Watson and Son Manuka Honey, James Williamson & Scott Lyttle NZL, 26:42:56
- 2 Seven Day Adventurists, Phil Walter & Adrian Retief, NZL, 28:56:09
- 3 Cycleworld, Guy Carter & Warwick McLaren, NZL, 29:24:23

Open Women

- 1 Hirepool, Nina McVicar & Reta Trotman NZL, 33:01:38
- 2 Sujon Thermatech, Erin Greene & Ingrid Richter NZL, 34:05:51
- 3 Amy/Haley, Haley Van Leeuwen & Amy Hollamby NZL, 34:52:14

Open Mixed

- 1 Team New World, Kate Fluker & Mark Williams NZL, 29:13:02
- 2 Freakshow, Sonya Looney CAN & Gordon Wadsworth USA, 30:45:42
- 3 Crank it Cycles/Specialised, Peter O'Sullivan & Su Pretto, NZL, 37:03:24

Masters 40+ Men

- 1 Imparables 2, Tomi Misser & Ibon Zugasti ESP, 27:02:27
- 2 222 Racing, Chris Clark & Gary Hall, NZL, 28:39:22
- 3 Bonk Rocket, Ollie Klein & James Knowler, AUS, 30:26:37

Masters 40+ Women

- 1 Cable Logging Geraldine, Kylie Burrows & Sarah Kaehler NZL, 40:19:37
- 2 Dumb and Dumber, Annie Cooper & Delia O'Malley NZL, 42:39:59
- 3 Peak Flow, Karolyne Dunn & Cath Wilson, NZL, 47:00:38

Masters 50+ Men

- 1 Forensic Plus One, Robert Watson & Bernie l'Ons, AUS, 33:07:13
- 2 Sniffer and the Rampant Ferrett, Paul Riordan & Stephen Davies, AUS, 33:33:58
- 3 Centaur, Paul Muldoon & Grant Tyrrell, NZL, 34:15:55

Masters 60+ Men

- 1 Canadian Eh, John Cockburn & David Lech, CAN, 45:59:29
- 2 Powered by Pinot, Mark Moores & Andrew Gordon, NZL, 50:07:56

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About IRONMAN

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About Wanda Sports Holding

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