

Hi All

The Knysna Oyster Festival kicked off on Saturday with it's first sporting event of the week - the popular 85km mountain bike race. Plenty of racing snakes lined up at the start and it was no surprise to see riders from MTN Energade, Mr Price Specialized, Jeep and Bizhub present in the elite batch. About 6minutes after the gun, when the neutral zone ended at the start of the climb up behind Simola, the front guys really put the hammer down. Yolande Speedy and Mariske Strauss (MTN Energade) blasted up the hill, leaving Ischen Stopforth (Bizhub) trailing in third, with myself a few seconds back, managing to get a gap on Catilin de Wet (Mr Price Specialized) who was lying 5th.

Hitting the second climb post a fast descent, I could feel my power was lacking - after some rest off the bike in recent weeks, I just didn't have the legs to catch Ischen, and Hanlie Booyens (Team Jeep) then caught me. We rode together in a bunch and managed to bridge the gap to Ischen & her bunch. Cresting the top of a steep pull however, before exiting out onto a long dirt road 30k in, a lapse in concentration and lack in power had me 5metres off the back .... then 10metres off the back .... and then in seconds, away sailed Ischen and Hanlie with the bunch of men, while I was left solo, in no-mans-land to ride the rest of the race on my own.

It was a lonely last 55km's and I put in as much effort as I could, but with my form currently a little off after a break, I couldn't better 5th position.

1.	Yolande Speedy (MTN Energade)	3:04:32
2.	Mariske Strauss (MTN Energade)	3:10:16
3.	Hanlie Booyens (Team Jeep)	3:17:03
4.	Ischen Stopforth (Team Bizhub)	3:20:28
<b>5.</b>	<b>Carla Rowley (RBS Biogen)</b>	<b>3:24:52</b>
6.	Caitlin de Wet (Mr Price Specialized)	3:34:39
7.	Jeanie Bomford (USN)	3:38:22
8.	Heletjie van Staden (Schwinn)	3:46:54

Catch you all again after the Medscheme Walkerville Classic in two weeks.

Regards  
Carla