

Hi All

Well the 1st of the month saw a massive field of riders line up at the start of the Illovo Eston Marathon in Natal. The generous prize purse always draws top riders from around the country and this year was no different. And at least this year the rain stayed away!

Unfortunately for myself - still recovering from a chest infection - I was forced to pace myself more conservatively for this event. The ladies had their own seeded start 5 mins after the pro men and the pace was fierce from the gun.

Cherise Taylor (USN) and Candice Neethling (DCM Chrome) hit it hard up the first climb and myself, Yolandi du Toit (Bizhub) and Sam Oosthuizen (Karsten Cycles) followed. Very quickly however, I had to let up somewhat and settle into an easier rhythm while the four early getaways pushed forward to fight for the Queen of Mountains prime a few kays in. For pretty much the entire marathon I found myself in 'no mans land' riding solo - behind the front four and ahead of the rest of the bunch ... containing Jeep riders Sarah van Heerden and Robyn Adendorff as well as Shawna Thunder, Tania Raats etc. I pretty much just maintained a comfortable pace that my condition could handle - which was a little far off the pace - but managed to sneak onto the podium in 5th place.

1.	Cherise Taylor (USN)	02:40:06
2.	Candice Neethling (DCM Chrome)	02:40:25
3.	Yolandi du Toit (Bizhub)	02:47:48
4.	Sam Oosthuizen (Karstens)	02:52:51
5.	Carla Rowley (RBS Biogen)	02:54:13
6.	Robyn Adendorff (Jeep)	02:55:05
7.	Sarah van Heerden (Jeep)	02:55:17
8.	Shawna Thunder (Wasp)	02:59:45

Be in touch again soon - hopefully in better health!

Happy trails

Carla