



CIRCUS OF DIRT ROUND 5, COMBE SYDENHAM

(INCLUDING SOUTH WEST CHAMPS)

RACE REPORT BY

CARLA HAINES-ELITE FEMALE



The Circus of Dirt series came to an end on the 3rd & 4th September. Some great courses over the 4 rounds but Jay & Maddie certainly did save the best until last! It was a weekend to remember; smiles and laughter and also pain and broken bones!

For me I wanted to win the South West Champions Title a second year running but I knew it was going to be a battle between myself and Jane Cummings of South Fork. From other riders opinions it seemed like a pretty good course, some hills and techy sections. I realise now that these hills were not just any old hills, they were climbs that tested riders ability not to lose traction and were completely draining after so many laps!

Race was due to start at 1pm but was delayed for another 30minutes as there was an accident on the motorway. This gave me extra time to fully warm up and get ready to beast it up the many of climbs awaiting.

The women started off at the rear after the men's categories had gone. Myself and Jane lead out together. The first climb started off pretty well but got steeper. I was trying to sit on her wheel at the last part of the hills before we hit some single track. She had slowly pulled away but I managed to gain a bit of time on the single track.

The last steep descent prior to more long steep climbs was pretty sketchy. Managing to descend down it in one piece I took a deep breath before a long journey to the top! The final down hill section all the way to the finish was definitely worth the pain and effort to get there.



We had a total of 3 laps to complete, which in theory doesn't seem a lot at all, but trust me it was enough! With Jane still in the lead, I was behind trying to chase more time. By the third lap I was comfortable in 2nd place but completely drained and exhausted.

I was pleased with how it went, although I did wish I won but it couldn't have gone to a better rider. Even though I didn't win the race, I was the Elite Female Series winner.

Thanks to Keith Loveday, WXC MTB Team UK for the support at the race.