

# Almutrad tops RW-Novartis two-day event

JAN PATRICK

**RIYADH:** With the Saudi national team competing at the Asian Games, it was left to multi-talented Nasser Almutrad to uphold local honors and take on the best cyclists from around the Kingdom.

He wasn't totally alone, however, and brought with him a team of young Saudi cyclists who selflessly rode for him with great tactical know-how. The race was the Novartis-Customer Health two-day event, which comprised three stages held over two days.

The weather was perfect for racing and the action was as good as in previous years, despite missing some of the top riders due to the Eid holidays. The first stage was an hour-long criterium around a technical circuit, and after some early animation from the masters in the field, the large pack was reduced to a manageable size. With 10 minutes to go while lapping some riders, Almutrad took advantage of the confusion and launched his attack, never to be seen again by the chasers. The sprint for second was close, with Paul Soycon just edging out Abdullah Al Dyabi on the line, ahead of Jiri Kuba, Charlie Ryan, Rob



Nasser Almutrad, third right, with the rest of the prizewinners at the Riyadh Wheelers-Novartis Customer Health two-day event. (AN photo)

Patrick, Scott Waight, Alex Carinan, George Morete, race revelation Jeff Forrester and Jun Cordial.

The second stage, a 3km time trial, was full of drama when Almutrad missed his start time by 10 seconds, leaving the race wide open. Surprised winner was Jiri Kuba, in only his second season with the Riyadh Wheelers and when interviewed later, admitted to riding at a high level in his home country of Germany. Showing that age is no barrier when it comes to time trial-

ing, the next positions were filled by fellow masters, Charlie Ryan and Rob Patrick. Almutrad recovered well to take 6th, leaving the race finally balanced with everything to go for in the final stage.

The final 40km road stage proved to be a tactical affair, with no one wanting to commit 100%, with so much at stake. Almutrad's young team rode brilliantly, delivering him to the finishing straight glued to the wheel of lead-out man Saleh Al Keteri.

As Al Keteri moved over it was a formality for Almutrad to take his second stage win, and with it the overall title. Again a large sprint finish decided the placings and with it brought to a close another successful two-day event.

Winner of the the Cat B title and now a strong contender for the championships is Carola von Skwarzinsky who won all three stages in dominating style. A visitor from Udhaliyah, Jeff Roetter, could have placed high in his first outing

with the Wheelers but unfortunately missed the first stage.

## Results:

**Stage 1:** 1. Nasser Almutrad 2. Paul Soycon 3. Abdullah Aldyabi 4. Jiri Kuba 5. Charlie Ryan 6. Rob Patrick 7. Scott Waight 8. Alex Carinan 9. George Morete 10. Jeff Forrester

**Stage 2:** 1. Jiri Kuba 2. Charlie Ryan 3. Rob Patrick 4. Paul Soycon 5. Scott Waight 6. Nasser Almutrad 7. Alex Carinan 8. George Morete 9. Art Cabal 10. Bruno Syfrig

**Stage 3:** 1. Nasser Almutrad 2. Saleh Alketeri 3. Art Cabal 4. Jun Cordial 5. Jiri Kuba 6. Abdullah Aldyabi 7. Charlie Ryan 8. Jeff Roetter 9. Jeff Forrester 10. Rob Patrick

**Final overall** 1. Nasser Almutrad 2. Jiri Kuba 3. Charlie Ryan 4. Rob Patrick 5. Paul Soycon 6. Art Cabal 7. Scott Waight 8. Alex Carinan 9. Jun Cordial 10. George Morete 11. Jeff Forrester 12. Saleh Alketeri 13. Abdullah Aldyabi 14. Mohammed Awny 15. Bruno Syfrig 16. Reiner Gocian 17. Harper Kilpatrick 18. Paul McParland 19. Arnel Maniago 20. David Nichols

**Categories (not in top 3)** Open Paul Soycon, Veteran Scott Waight, Master Rob Patrick, Senior R Bruno Syfrig, Cat B Carola von Skwarzinsky