

ROAD RACING

NO STOPPING MARKOWSKI IN PERF'S PEDAL

REPORT ROBERT GARBUTT PICTURES PHIL O'CONNOR

A spell of mild weather was just what Mark Markowski needed to win Sunday's Perf's Pedal Race at Newtown in Hampshire, the opening road race of the new season.

The French-based Hastings and St Leonards CC rider hates racing in the cold, so when temperatures kept well above the seasonal norm, there was no stopping him as he led in the remains of an eight-man break which had been away for three quarters of this 53-mile VC St Raphael promotion.

Five riders were left in at the kill at the bottom of Lodge Hill, but the odds were against Markowski with the Team Zoyland duo of Ben Luckwell and Nick Noble watching his every move.

"Somebody shouted to me to go for a long one with a lap to go and the others just laughed," Markowski explained.

"That is just what I did. I had been doing my bit, but not too much with two Team Zoylands in the break. I went at the bottom of the hill. Jumped in a small gear, got a gap and that was it."

Luckwell was second at four seconds, Noble was next a further second down, Mike Parker (Mid-Devon RC) was fourth at the same time and Mark Jones (GS Stella) finished fifth at seven seconds.

It was mid-way through the second lap that the break went when the final five also had Dominic Windsor (Hastings and St Leonards CC) and Graham Oliver (VC St Raphael) for company. From 10 seconds their lead steadily grew by some 25 seconds per lap until the fifth circuit

when their advantage peaked at 1-30.

The bunch then pegged a few seconds back when they started chasing properly, but the break also accelerated and as their lead shot up to 1-45 with two laps to go, Windsor and Oliver were dropped. The latter stuck to his task trailing the break by 28 seconds, but Windsor had given up, tired further by a short-lived break on the first lap.

"You were meant to be my lead-out man," Markowski joked to his clubmate after the finish, but Windsor was not too upset as he was looking forward to returning to Florida the following Wednesday.

"I have been there for the past three years," he explained. "That is why I went away on the first lap. I am not used to starting so slow, I am used to riding the criteriums in Florida," he said. "I got dropped on the hill with two laps to go."

Oliver was caught by the bunch as they hit full speed on the last lap, but it was too late to

have any effect on the break and 1-54 after his brother had won the race, Martin Markowski took the bunch sprint for sixth place.

The Markowskis also ride the Circuit of Broedhalfpenny Down this Sunday on a similar course at nearby Hambledon.

"I hope to stay over until the Tour of the Marshes, then going back to France on March 8," said Mark Markowski.

"I have changed teams and will be in Wayne Bennington's old team, the UV Aube. I hope to go training with Malcolm Elliott when he is not away racing.

"I like the life in France. I only started cycling when I was 18, I am 22 now. I may stay in Britain next year to see how things go, but I am not really good enough for international selection just yet."

MARK MARKOWSKI (Hastings & St Leonards CC) 53m in 2-13-32; 2. **B. Luckwell** (Team Zoyland) at 4sec; 3. **N. Noble** (Team Zoyland) at 5sec; 4. **M. Parker** (Mid-Devon RC) at 5. **M. Jones** (GS Stella) at 7sec; 6. **Martin Markowski** (Hastings & St Leonards CC) at 1-54; 7. **M. Kruse** (VC Eian); 8. **P. Rogers** (VC St Raphael); 9. **K. Jarrett** (Southdown Velo); 10. **A. Hitchens** (BCF private member) all st.



After two-and-a-quarter hours of sustained effort, Mark Markowski can afford to smile after winning Perf's Pedal.