

# BROOKER'S KING OF THE ROAD!



DAVE BROOKER (VC ETOILE) is the 1988 Sussex Division BCF Senior Road Race Champion, and when he receives his medal it will look very nice on his sideboard along with the one he won in December as the South of England cyclo-cross champion. Brooker becomes the fifth Etoile member to win the senior title since 1979.

Brooker won the race in classic style, from the front, but afterwards he was full of praise for Louis Passfield, the Hastings & St. Leonards CC-SW Cycles rider, who shared the lead with him for the last thirty miles of the race. Passfield came to Sussex this year from Scotland, and last month was involved in a break in a race at Ninfield won by another Etoile rider, Mike Coyle.

The Sussex title race over 85 1/2 miles was far from easy. Riders covered 5 laps of a Hellingly-Cowbeech-Vines Cross circuit before moving on to 4 laps of a Rushlake Green-Cowbeech circuit for the crucial stages with a climb up Kingsley Hill each lap where the finish was situated. The weather did its best to add to the toughness of the race with some heavy downpours and crackling thunder in between the better periods.

The field soon thinned out for various reasons, with early retirements including Paul Lipcombe (Central Sussex), Ron Pannell (Regent), Ian Leeding (Worthing), and Eastbourne's Mark Williams, back on the scene after several seasons' absence. Later, one of the race favourites, Etoile's Mike Coyle, went out following a puncture.

Little of any consequence happened on the Hellingly circuit, apart from one point where the riders had the chance to exchange greetings to the juniors racing in the opposite direction! But the Hellingly circuit served to soften the field up and on the last lap Brooker and Passfield decided they were in with a real chance and stormed away. As they topped Kingsley Hill for the first time they had 2m.45secs. in hand over the steadily thinning main field.

With 24 miles left the race was on in earnest and the two leaders had to pull out all the stops if they were to stay clear. There were still some notable riders ready to pounce in the pack. A lap later, to the accompaniment of a large clap of thunder, the pair had lost 45secs. of their lead. But although Brooker wasn't foolishly going to do anything yet to break their rhythm, he did look stronger than Passfield as he came up the finishing hill again. The Etoile riders had been tipped off prior to the start on the likely pattern of the race and so far it was conforming to that pattern.

Third time up the hill and the lead was down to 1m.25secs, but a lap later, as they heard the welcoming sound of the bell, the pair still held a useful 1m.5secs. advantage.

The Cowbeech circuit is mostly twisting and it enables escapees to stay out of sight but at Poul Mile the long straight gives the bunch the chance to glimpse riders ahead. It was here that Brooker and Passfield truly earned their medals for they refused to let up. As they came into sight at the foot of Kingsley Hill the bunch were now so close behind that it looked like a bunch finish but then Brooker powered up the climb to win the title and was almost as pleased that Passfield managed to stay clear to take the silver medal ahead of teammate Dave Harding.

The race was well-organised, and certainly there was a great deal of support from the clubs, officials, and so on, but a service vehicle would have come in handy, and if it had been held on a Sunday one or two riders wouldn't have been excluded.

RESULT:- 1st Dave Brooker (VC Etoile) the 85 1/2 miles in 5hrs. 59m.40s. 2nd L. Passfield (Hastings). 3rd D. Harding (Hastings). 4th M. Austin (VC Etoile). 5th J. Johnston (Hastings). 6th Martin Markowski (Hastings). All same time as winner. 7th A. Green (VC Etoile). 8th R. Kennison (Dinnington RC). 9th Mark Markowski (Hastings). 10th C. Tamon (Central Sussex). 11th M. Scott (Hastings). 12th T. Mairs (Central Sussex). 13th P. Blackmore (East Grinstead). 14th A. Hillman (Hastings). 15th M. Jones (GS Stella). All at 1m.40s. 16th N. Linton (Worthing Excelsior) at 8m.40s. 40 entrants.

**46-Mile Junior Championship.** There was no repeat of last year's race when Regent RC's Oliver Davies ran away with the title and it ended in a sprint finish.

RESULT:- 1st Mick Smith (Eastbourne Rovers-Phoenix Cycles) 46-miles in 2hrs. 4m. 0s. 2nd N. James (VC Etoile). 3rd D. Goals (Eastbourne). 4th D. Wood (Hastings). 5th J. Buckley (Worthing Excelsior). 6th M. Blann (Hastings). 7th O. Davies (Regent). All same time. 8th S. Tully (Brighton Mitre)-crashed just before the finish. 9th S. Pilbeam (Bognor CC). 17 entrants.



ALAN GREEN CONTINUED HIS COMEBACK AFTER INJURY WITH 4TH IN A KENT LEAGUE RR AND 2ND IN THE FINAL RACE OF WORTHING'S EVENING SERIES.