

Venue: Wellington, New Zealand- XC#2- 12/13 April 1997



Paola Pezzo, Olympic Champion, taking the first round at Napa, CA, USA, last week

Course: 8.4km, 350 climbing each lap.

Surface: rock, sandy clay.

Medium technical

Spectators: 6,000;

Weather: Warm, sunny

Laps/Distance: 4/33.6km.

Average speed: Women - 17.76kp/h

starters: 19; finishers: 17

In front of an enthusiastic crowd, 1996 Olympic champion, **Paola Pezzo** (ITA, Gary Fisher) today continued her domination of women's mountain bike racing, with another crushing victory, more than four minutes ahead of World Champion, **Alison Sydor** (CAN, Volvo-Cannondale).

The crystal clear air of Wellington, New Zealand, and a circuit full of short, steep, climbs inspired Pezzo - again wearing her gold-sequined shorts - to attack on the first, longest climb, as she had done only one week before at the first round of the Grundig-UCI mountain bike world cup, at Napa, California and with the same devastating effect.

"I looked around and there was nobody behind me," said Pezzo of her rivals. For two of the four laps, the Italian continued to press home her advantage while the field strung out behind her. Despite only riding at *"about eighty per cent,"* of her maximum, Pezzo was afflicted by cramp on the third lap. But she had enough of a lead to safely slow down for a while before resuming her graceful rampage for the final time around this panoramic city centre circuit.

"The trip from Napa last week to here was a long one, my legs did not like it," explained Pezzo about the reason for the cramp. With two wins from two races, the Italian champion is now significantly closer to her ambition of winning the World Cup title.

Alison Sydor, despite having been on the receiving end of a second sound beating in two weeks, is far from daunted. *"I've got two second places now, and as far as winning the overall series goes, you have to finish either first or second in most of the rounds, so I'm not doing badly. Form is something that goes around and comes around. When I'm on top form, I can beat anybody."*

Italian riders featured strongly in the results today. Third place was taken by **Nadia de Negri** (ITA, Bianchi), while her compatriot, **Annabella Stropparo** (Volvo-Cannondale) finished fourth.

The great **Juli Furtado** (USA, GT) had a painful reminder that her Lyme's disease is far from cured. Suffering from ennervation, the three times World Cup winner was forced to retire before the end of the first lap.

With relatively few of the leading international women attending this race, local riders had a chance to gain world cup points. Leading this charge was New Zealand's greatest female cyclist, **Kathy Lynch**, who finished sixth.

Paul Skilbeck

Women's XC Results:

Pos	Bib	Name	First Name	NATION	TEAM	WCPTS	Time
1	1	PEZZO	PAOLA	ITA	GARY FISHER	75	1:53:39.00
2	2	SYDOR	ALISON	CAN	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	70	1:57:40.00
3	21	DE NEGRI	NADIA	ITA	BIANCHI MARTINI	66	2:00:02.00
4	34	STROPPARO	ANNABELLA	ITA	VOLVO-CANNONDALE	62	2:01:51.00
5	4	TOMLINSON	LESLEY	CAN	KONA FACTORY	58	2:03:17.00
6	67	LYNCH	KATHY	NZL	AVANTI	55	2:03:52.00
7	6	DUNLAP	ALISON	USA	TEAM GT	52	2:05:41.00
8	23	GRIGSON	MARY	AUS	GIANT/AIS	49	2:05:43.00
9	36	PRYDE	SUSY	NZL	SAECO/CANNONDALE	46	2:08:39.00
10	39	TANIKAWA	KANAKO	JPN	A&F;	43	2:11:16.00
11	18	TURCUTTO	MARIA PAOLA	ITA	TEAM CECINI LIVI	40	2:11:32.00
12	54	ZU PUTLITZ	HEDDA	GER	TEAM H+H	39	2:15:05.00
13	55	MAHONEY	ANN	NZL	SPECIALIZED NZL	38	2:16:16.00
14	65	HAWTHORNE-ALLEN	TANYA	NZL	SAM'S BIKE SHOP	37	2:17:05.00
15	59	GEYSEN	HANNEKE	AUS	IRON HORSE	36	2:17:27.00
16	61	PATTERSON	ELEANOR	AUS		35	2:21:44.00
17	60	HASTIE	KAREN	NZL	GIANT	34	1 LAP DOWN
dnf							
	64	ERIKSSON	HELENA	SWE	TEAM VIPER/CANNO	0	DNF
	13	FURTADO	JULIANA	USA	TEAM GT	0	DNF