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Nicole Cooke kept hold of her lead despite a full on assault by T-Mobile in the final stage of the Geelong women's tour. American Tina Pic won the final stage.



Welsh cyclist Nicole Cooke, 23, has claimed the 2007 Geelong Tour crown to confirm her status as the world ranked number one in women's cycling and signal she's in form to perform well in Saturday's opening round of the UCI Women's Road World Cup in Geelong. Cooke, the 2003 and 2006 World Cup Series Champion, went into today's final stage, five laps of a 15km road circuit at Barwon Heads on Victoria's Surf Coast, with only a slender seven second overall lead and with twenty riders within a minute of her but she responded to every attack to finish with the front group and cement her victory.

The key assault came, as expected, from the T-Mobile team which had three riders, Judith Arndt at 17sec, Ina-Yoko Teutenberg at 20sec and Oenone Wood at 22sec, poised to wrench the leader's purple jersey from the Raleigh Lifeforce rider. On the third lap all six T-Mobile members went to the front and applied the pressure but Cooke responded to foil their plan.

"Today the T-Mobile team threw down the gauntlet and opened up the racing but with my teammates we were able to ride within our capabilities and to seal off the overall win," said Cooke. "We're absolutely delighted."

Wood launched a solo attack in the final lap and was joined by New Zealand's Michelle Hyland soon after. The pair managed to gain an advantage but Cooke's team mates rallied to defend her jersey catching the escapees two kilometres from the finish. With Cooke's Tour victory secure the jostling then began for stage honours.

American Tina Pic (Colavita/Sutter Home) won that battle to claim the Barwon Heads win for the third straight year pipping Sydney's Rochelle Gilmore (Menikini Gysko) and Melbourne's Jenny MacPherson

(Australian National Team).

T-Mobile weren't the only threat for Cooke in today's stage which offered bonus seconds in the four intermediate sprints and at the finish.

"There was a lot to keep track of and I don't know how we did it I'm really struggling to remember the race," explained Cooke. "Everything happened, between sprints, lead-outs, crashes, windy echelons, chasing, closing gaps, attacks, counters, the finish somewhere in there, I don't know it was a very busy day.

"This is awesome we've started the season, our first UCI race and we've won it," said Cooke whose brother lives in Australia and who has spent the last eight weeks in Melbourne preparing for the season. "I have got some things which make it very nice to be here, it's not really like being away from home and it's great for training."

Cooke not only protected her lead but she extended it picking up bonus seconds by winning the fourth intermediate sprint and claiming places in the sprints two and three. She finished the 228km three day event with total time of 6hr15min46sec, ten seconds clear of second placed overall Germany's Larissa Kleinmann. T-Mobile claimed the next three places through Arndt at 23sec, Teutenberg at 26sec and Wood at 28sec. T-Mobile gained some consolation with a jersey victory for South Australian Alexis Rhodes who won the Best Young Rider classification.

"Today we were trying to go for the overall and we got on the front and did a bit of a teams time trial and managed to shell most of the bunch," said Rhodes. "The girls were awesome but we couldn't shake Nicole, she's a class rider."

Meantime stage one winner Dotsie Bausch (USA - Colavita/Sutter Home) who began the day in third overall, eight seconds off the lead, was the biggest loser of the day. She opted to target the sprint bonuses in an effort to overtake Cooke and began well with second place in the first sprint and victory in the second to move to within four seconds of the lead. But the Kentucky born rider was caught behind a crash during the third lap and her challenge ended.

"We were going for time bonuses for the purple (leader's jersey) and there was just a big, bad crash," said Bausch who won the Tour's opening time trial stage on Tuesday. "I almost caught back on and in 100 metres there was another huge crash."

But Bausch's team mate Pic rode away with the lead group and sprinted home first to give Colavita/Sutter Home a second stage win.

"I felt bummed, I was so bummed," said Pic of the misfortune of Bausch. "But the cool thing is I have this pink bike this year and for every win we're donating US\$1000 to breast cancer research."

Tomorrow the riders will enjoy a day's rest to prepare for Saturday's opening round of the UCI World Cup Series. The 115km (8 laps of 15km course) Geelong World Cup will kick off at 10.30am from Waterfront Geelong with more than 100 riders from 17 nations vying for victory.

Stage 4 results (Barwon Heads road race, 80km)

- 1 Tina Pic (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light)
1:59:47
- 2 Rochelle Gilmore (Aus, Menikini Gysko)
- 3 Jenny Macpherson (Aus, Australian National Team)
- 4 Nicole Cooke (GBr, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
- 5 Katherine Bates (Aus, T-Mobile Women)
- 6 Charlotte Becker (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
- 7 Melissa Holt (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team)
- 8 Trixi Worrack (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
- 9 Susanne Ljungskog (Swe, Team Flexpoint)
- 10 Janildes Fernandes (Bra, Brazilian National Team)
- 11 Larissa Kleinmann (Ger, German National Team)
- 12 Joanne Kieranowski (NZI, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
- 13 Catherine Hare (GBr, Biggin & Scott)
- 14 Leigh Hobson (Can, Cheerwine)
- 15 Judith Arndt (Ger, T-Mobile Women)
- 16 Lorian Graham (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
- 17 Michelle Hyland (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team)
- 18 Betina Hold (Can, Cheerwine)
- 19 Emma Rickards (Aus, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
- 20 Vicki Whitelaw (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team)
- 21 Edita Pucinskaite (Ltu, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
- 22 Jennifer Fay (Irl, Biggin & Scott)
- 23 Loes Gunnewijk (Ned, Team Flexpoint)
- 24 Toni Bradshaw (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team)
- 25 Gina Waibl (NZI, Team Kiwi)
- 26 Sarah Düster (Ger, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
- 27 Miho Oki (Jpn, Menikini Gysko)

28 Linda Villumsen (Den, T-Mobile Women)
29 Alexis Rhodes (Aus, T-Mobile Women)
30 Olivia Gollan (Aus, Menikini Gysko)
31 Ina-Yoko Teutenberg (Ger, T-Mobile Women)
32 Eva Lutz (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
33 Oenone Wood (Aus, T-Mobile Women)
34 Dotsie Bausch (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light) 0:00:45
35 Karin Aune (Swe, Menikini Gysko)
36 Laura Van Gilder (USA, Cheerwine)
37 Kate Nichols (Aus, Australian National Team)
38 Courtney Le Lay (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
39 Theresa Cliff-Ryan (USA, Landlink Cycling Team)
40 Natalie Bates (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport)
41 Sara Carrigan (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
42 Jocelyn Loane (Aus, Australian National Team)
43 Patricia Palmer (Aus, MB Coaching)
44 Nikki Egyed (Aus, Australian National Team)
45 Andrea Graus (Aut, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
46 Sarah Ulmer (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team)
47 Madeleine Sandig (Ger, Team Flexpoint)
48 Loes Markerink (Ned, Team Flexpoint)
49 Angela Brodtka (Ger, German National Team)
50 Tanja Slater (GBr, Great Britain National Team) 0:01:00
51 Amanda Spratt (Aus, Australian National Team)
52 Janine Ridsdale (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net) 0:01:11
53 Maryam Rogers (GBr, Great Britain National Team) 0:02:26
54 Annelies Basten (NZI, Team Kiwi)
55 Tiffany Cromwell (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport) 0:07:12
56 Liz Hayman (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
57 Peta Mullens (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport)
58 Brei Gudsell (NZI, Team Kiwi)
59 Alison Powers (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light)
60 Amber Jenkins (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team)
61 Sheree Richmond (Aus, MB Coaching)
62 Toireasa Gallagher (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport)
63 Sophie Ruderman (GBr, Biggin & Scott)
64 Niki Fisher (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
65 Louise Kerr (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
66 Deborah Fagg (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team)
67 Rachel O'connell (Aus, Cheerwine)
68 Camila Rodrigues (Bra, Brazilian National Team)

69 Sarah Murdoch (NZI, Team Kiwi)
70 Nina Köhn (Ger, German National Team)
71 Sheba Farrin (USA, MB Coaching)
72 Hannah Banks (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
73 Gail Johnston (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
74 Brooke Ourada (USA, Cheerwine)
75 Virginia Henning (Ger, German National Team)
76 Emma Lovelock (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
77 Liz Young (Aus, MB Coaching) 0:09:04
78 Rebecca Jones (GBr, MB Coaching) 0:16:27
DNF Priska Doppmann (Swi, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
DNF Sereina Trachsel (Swi, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation)
DNF Regina Schleicher (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
DNF Dorte Rasmussen (Den, Menikini Gysko)
DNF Alex Wrubleski (Can, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light)
DNF Candice Sullivan (Aus, Australian National Team)
DNF Clemilda Fernandes (Bra, Brazilian National Team)
DNF Uenia Fernandes (Bra, Brazilian National Team)
DNF Naomi Williams (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport)
DNF Skye-Lee Armstrong (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport)
DNF Carla Ryan (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport)
DNF Kerri-Anne Torckler (NZI, Team Kiwi)
DNF Jemma O'brien (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
DNF Annette Beutler (Swi, Team Flexpoint)
DNF Rushlee Buchanan (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team)

Final general classification

1 Nicole Cooke (GBr, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation) 6:15:46
2 Larissa Kleinmann (Ger, German National Team) 0:00:10
3 Judith Arndt (Ger, T-Mobile Women) 0:00:23
4 Ina-Yoko Teutenberg (Ger, T-Mobile Women) 0:00:26
5 Oenone Wood (Aus, T-Mobile Women) 0:00:28
6 Susanne Ljungskog (Swe, Team Flexpoint) 0:00:40
7 Tina Pic (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light) 0:00:46
8 Vicki Whitelaw (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team) 0:00:47
9 Dotsie Bausch (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light) 0:00:54
10 Edita Pucinskaite (Ltu, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung) 0:00:56
11 Loes Gunnewijk (Ned, Team Flexpoint)
12 Alexis Rhodes (Aus, T-Mobile Women) 0:01:05
13 Sarah Düster (Ger, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation) 0:01:07

- 14 Eva Lutz (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung) 0:01:13
- 15 Trixi Worrack (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung)
- 16 Katherine Bates (Aus, T-Mobile Women)
- 17 Laura Van Gilder (USA, Cheerwine)
- 18 Leigh Hobson (Can, Cheerwine) 0:01:16
- 19 Olivia Gollan (Aus, Menikini Gysko) 0:01:18
- 20 Rochelle Gilmore (Aus, Menikini Gysko) 0:01:24
- 21 Toni Bradshaw (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team) 0:01:25
- 22 Joanne Kieranowski (NZI, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation) 0:01:27
- 23 Sara Carrigan (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport) 0:01:28
- 24 Michelle Hyland (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team) 0:01:29
- 25 Kate Nichols (Aus, Australian National Team)
- 26 Melissa Holt (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team) 0:01:36
- 27 Nikki Egyed (Aus, Australian National Team) 0:01:37
- 28 Natalie Bates (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport) 0:01:39
- 29 Betina Hold (Can, Cheerwine) 0:01:47
- 30 Emma Rickards (Aus, Raleigh Lifeforce Creation) 0:01:50
- 31 Andrea Graus (Aut, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung) 0:02:00
- 32 Karin Aune (Swe, Menikini Gysko) 0:02:04
- 33 Madeleine Sandig (Ger, Team Flexpoint) 0:02:08
- 34 Linda Villumsen (Den, T-Mobile Women)
- 35 Catherine Hare (GBr, Biggin & Scott)
- 36 Gina Waibl (NZI, Team Kiwi) 0:02:10
- 37 Tanja Slater (GBr, Great Britain National Team) 0:02:11
- 38 Angela Brodtka (Ger, German National Team) 0:04:16
- 39 Lorian Graham (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport) 0:05:21
- 40 Charlotte Becker (Ger, Equipe Nürnberger Versicherung) 0:05:55
- 41 Janine Ridsdale (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net) 0:05:58
- 42 Jenny Macpherson (Aus, Australian National Team) 0:06:07
- 43 Patricia Palmer (Aus, MB Coaching) 0:06:37
- 44 Janildes Fernandes (Bra, Brazilian National Team) 0:06:39
- 45 Jocelyn Loane (Aus, Australian National Team) 0:07:05
- 46 Annelies Basten (NZI, Team Kiwi) 0:07:46
- 47 Sarah Ulmer (NZI, BikeNZ New Zealand National Team) 0:07:52
- 48 Tiffany Cromwell (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport) 0:08:14
- 49 Amanda Spratt (Aus, Australian National Team) 0:08:16
- 50 Brooke Ourada (USA, Cheerwine) 0:08:48
- 51 Miho Oki (Jpn, Menikini Gysko) 0:09:28
- 52 Alison Powers (USA, Colavita/Sutter Home presented by Cooking Light) 0:09:34
- 53 Toireasa Gallagher (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport) 0:11:50
- 54 Niki Fisher (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net) 0:11:57
- 55 Hannah Banks (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport) 0:12:02
- 56 Peta Mullens (Aus, NSW Institute of Sport) 0:12:38

- 57 Liz Hayman (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net) 0:12:46
- 58 Sarah Murdoch (NZI, Team Kiwi) 0:12:56
- 59 Jennifer Fay (Irl, Biggin & Scott) 0:13:05
- 60 Brei Gudsell (NZI, Team Kiwi) 0:13:15
- 61 Theresa Cliff-Ryan (USA, Landlink Cycling Team) 0:14:23
- 62 Sophie Ruderman (GBr, Biggin & Scott) 0:14:28
- 63 Amber Jenkins (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team) 0:14:51
- 64 Deborah Fagg (Aus, Landlink Cycling Team)
- 65 Rachel O'connell (Aus, Cheerwine) 0:15:02
- 66 Loes Markerink (Ned, Team Flexpoint) 0:16:15
- 67 Virginia Henning (Ger, German National Team) 0:18:19
- 68 Louise Kerr (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport) 0:19:41
- 69 Nina Köhn (Ger, German National Team) 0:23:09
- 70 Gail Johnston (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net) 0:23:37
- 71 Liz Young (Aus, MB Coaching) 0:24:05
- 72 Sheba Farrin (USA, MB Coaching) 0:24:26
- 73 Emma Lovelock (Aus, Team South Coast - raceconcept.net)
0:25:32
- 74 Sheree Richmond (Aus, MB Coaching) 0:32:13
- 75 Courtney Le Lay (Aus, Queensland Academy of Sport) 0:32:47
- 76 Maryam Rogers (GBr, Great Britain National Team) 0:36:11
- 77 Camila Rodrigues (Bra, Brazilian National Team) 0:40:29
- 78 Rebecca Jones (GBr, MB Coaching) 0:51:11

Official website: www.geelongworldcup.com