



Off the Beaten Track



New pathways, new plans, and new beginnings – I'm excited! This year began with what I thought was going to have a devastating impact on my career but has turned out to be a real positive moving forward. Without sounding all 'Kooky' I really do believe everything happens for a reason. At the time you may not see the reason and you may never know the reason but there always is one!

In my last column I wrote that I had a lot to ponder as my injury healed. Ponder I did and I came out the other side a refreshed and positively inspired road cyclist, excited about the future! That's right I'm going to have a crack at being a proper roadie!!

I have always raced on the road throughout my whole career but track events had always taken priority; meaning that I'd never given road my full attention. However, things have fallen into place nicely and I have joined the Jayco – AIS road team with coach Martin Barras.

Since joining the road program I have felt a new sense of motivation for the sport and have realised the vast number of opportunities that exist on the road opposed to the track. I am really excited about where the next few months will take me and am looking forward to the new challenges and lots of hard work that I have put my hand up for!

The changes to the Olympic Track Program have really limited the options that exist on the track and this has been highlighted to me and has been a big factor in my new direction. My road campaign began with the Women's Tour of New Zealand. Going into the race I was unsure where I was at, due to the interrupted preparation I had had with my collarbone. But after giving it some consideration and hearing what was expected of me I felt as though I was ready enough to be a strong

contributor to the team.

During the tour I had good days and bad days. On the double stage day I had a small crash in some loose gravel only about five kilometres from the finish. This brought out my fragile side since it had only been seven weeks since breaking my collarbone and I managed to land on the same side. Fortunately nothing was broken this time! I'm pleased to say I overcome the fragile feelings and started the twilight criterium later that day. They say the best way to eliminate fear is to get straight back onto the bike! This proved to be true.

We had a successful result in New Zealand winning the teams classification and this gave us lots of confidence as a team for the coming races.


From New Zealand we went straight to camp at the AIS in Canberra for a team training camp. I had a great time getting to know all the girls better and for the first time I really enjoyed being in Canberra.

It's a special feeling being part of a team and I am really enjoying being a part of it having already experienced what 'being a team' means in our first race together and the satisfaction that comes along with it. This is something that wasn't really there on the track, where you tend to more often than not race as individuals rather than as a team.

The other big difference on the road will be training my body to have the ability to fight fatigue and back up day after day in long tours. This will in turn also help to make me stronger for the one day races too. Track was all about shorter intense efforts but also has similar training techniques that will compliment my transition to the road. I will be relying on my skill from the track to help me when battling with 150 other girls to get to the front on the road!

While in Canberra, I also got to experience the AIS Altitude House and all its benefits without having to go to the great lengths of travelling to the Alps!

Next stop will be Europe.

Let the fun begin! 
Belinda