

Gastown victory prompts tears

Grain's win sets tone
for here bid in Beijing

BY GARY KINGSTON

VANCOUVER SUN

CYCLING | Beijing-bound cyclist Gina Grain got emotional listening to O Canada at the start of the Tour de Gastown on Wednesday night.

"It was a good thing I had my sunglasses on at the start line because when the Canadian anthem was playing, I almost started crying," she said.

By the time the hard-peddalling, wheel-to-wheel action of the 30-lap, 36-kilometre criterium around the historic part of the city had ended, the Burnaby native had gone from nearly teary-eyed to in-race goosebumps to a smile as big as a bike wheel.

Grain had a hard-earned victory after a gutsy sprint finish down the wobble-inducing cobblestones of Water Street, \$2,200 in her pocket in prize money and cash lap prizes and an emotional boost as she prepares to go to the Olympics.

"I couldn't have asked for a better way to have my send-off to Beijing," said Grain, who will actually get one more goodbye tonight when she competes in her own backyard at the Giro di Burnaby. "Being in your hometown you can't ask for anything better than that.

"Absolutely it's given me a boost. I had goosebumps throughout the entire race. It was really motivating."

In the 50-lap men's race, Andrew Pinfold of North Vancouver, the beneficiary of some hard-slogging by teammate Svein Tuft, won a last-stretch sprint to give Langley-based pro team Symmetrics Cycling its first Tour de Gastown win in six tries.

"It was a little bit of chaos [in the last lap]," said Pinfold, who beat Tim Sherstobitoff of Kelowna by a bike length. "But I had all my teammates around me at the end.

"We kind of managed our way through the chaos. I came from pretty far back on the corner [turning onto Water St.] With 100 metres, I was like 'Holy crap, I'm going to win Gastown.' I was pretty psyched."