

HardTales in the Wild

Arrow 24hr - Wisemans Ferry - 2006

There has been a lot of discussion on the Arrow 24 hr race held on 13/14 May at Wisemans Ferry. What has been overlooked is that there was some tight racing throughout the field and it came down to the last tramp/trek leg to sort out placings.

There were 14 teams entered in the event with Stu Adams going alone in the race.

Leg 1. Run leg of approx 5k depending on which way you went

Most of the teams took around one hour to find two checkpoints around the hills near Del Rio resort. Team Millie were the first to finish with most teams coming in within 10 min of the leaders. The checkpoints were easy to find with route selection between CP's being the decider.

Leg 2. Kayak leg of approx 32k up river to the bridge to nowhere

The water was flat for the start with a light tail breeze, once again Millie set the pace and increased their lead with a time of 2h34min. Our team had just passed the halfway mark on the outwards leg when Millie glided past with around 10k to finish their paddle. The racing between the majorities of the kayaks was very close with two tight packs within 10 min of the leaders. Stu Adams was in his single kayak leading the chasing pack.

For those of us at the end of the field we spent the last 30 min of the leg dodging speed boats and punching into a stiff breeze and swell.

It was a good work out on the paddle leg and no complaints so far.

Leg 3. MTB approx 80k North of St Albans and returning on the Great Northern Rd, onto the ferry and back to Del Rio

Who would have thought that catching a ferry would come into your race plan!

We were given a mandatory 1 hr break after the kayak, for the support crew to take us to St Albans for the start of the bike leg. One team was almost at St Albans when they had to turn back and pick up their lights, I think they started late.

The MTB leg covered some of the Dirtworks course which was held the week before.

The first 32 k was a fast flat section on the main road north with a steady climb up to the

checkpoint on Mount Manning. This is the CP that was around 800m south of where it was supposed to be. We slowed at the intersection where the CP was placed, looked to the north-west and there it was. We then spent 5 min working out exactly where we were before we headed back down the Great Northern Rd. Most teams did the return journey south with no map as there were no checkpoints to look for and there were heaps of bike tracks from the weekend before. It was still a good fast ride, even faster for the top teams with a few rough technical sections in between. The quicker teams made it out of the mountains before dark with the remainder having a couple of hours in the rough stuff. When the leaders came off the mountain the race was on to get to the ferry before the others. As it turned out Millie, Tronk and Mountain Designs made it to one ferry with Crank catching up to the leaders only to just miss the ferry. It cost them around 10 min.

The top ride of the day was from Acuity, Annalisa McKay and Matt Shields. They were last off the kayak leg and passed four teams on the MTB leg. They flew past us as I was walking down a rocky section while they were leaping from rock to rock in the dark. They passed us within about 15 min of the ferry but, they just missed catching one while we rocked up just as the next ferry arrived and joined them for the trip home. The bike legs were also close with the three top teams all taking around 5hrs 30min.

Leg 4. Tramp/Trek 35k plus, mainly on fire roads with one steep/rock descent to pick up CP 7

Mountain designs bolted to the lead on this leg taking around 5hrs with Tronk around 25min behind. The lead teams really put in even though the whole leg was fairly boring with little hard navigation to undertake. Only 10 min separated Crank and Millie for 3rd and 4th place, that's close after 16 hours racing. One Cp located at an abandoned house also proved difficult to find. It was where it was supposed to be but it was well hidden as described in the race notes. Our team Just Trippin joined up with Acuity for most of the trek leg. We jogged the down hills and flats and started to catch up to a couple of teams.

As three teams descended the mountain to CP 7 we ran into Lithium and Gary and Peter show. At this stage at around 2am there were 5 teams within 30min of each other with just the run of around 12k back to Del Rio Resort. There were two routes back to the finish, the race was still on. Acuity and Just Trippin took the main St Albans route with the other teams the dirt road. We saw lights behind us at one stage and we all turned off our own head torches but the lights soon disappeared. I think it was a farmer out checking on all the noise from the dogs as we ran down the road.

Team Lithium kept their lead with Acuity and Just Trippin crossing the finish together. Thanks Annalisa and Matt for staying with us, I thoroughly enjoyed the run home even though it nearly destroyed me.

Stu Adams did not come up in the results sheet but I believe he came first overall by himself, unranked, WOW!

SUNDAY MORNING

We were up early as the power boats were racing outside the resort.

It was a relaxing morning sitting around the camp area with Bronnie Milne cooking great pancakes for everyone, Thanks Bronnie. Less than half the teams remained for the presentation, it was a little disappointing but it was Mothers Day and some teams had to get home. Most that attended the lunch had a good meal and we all got a prize.

I agree with many of the comments put up on Sleepmonsters, in the end there was some good tight racing between both the lead teams and the rest of the field, that's what keeps us turning up! I hope the Arrow is back on next year with a few more teams!

Pa

