

# HardTales in the Wild

Hells Bells - July 05

I thought I might write a short (I hope) piece to give you some insight into the sport of Adventure Racing (AR). Go grab a coffee and sit down and enjoy.....

The basic concept behind AR is to get from A to B as fast as you can. Sounds simple.... You are also required to collect a range of checkpoints along the way. All this is done using maps (and compass) to select best route selection. Still sound simple..... I forgot to add, you can get from A to B by Biking (Mountain or Road), Running, Swimming, Kayaking, Snorkelling, Climbing, Canyoning, Roller Blading etc some of the most picturesque and cruel terrain the world has to offer.

Hells Bells was to be a 24hr Adventure race comprising of teams of 3. The premier class is where the prize money is (\$2,000) and it requires a female in your team. I would be racing in an all male team - Team Hardtale.com - QLD (and check out the team site [www.hardtale.com](http://www.hardtale.com)) as a guest with permanent member Anthony (Ant) Michell and another guest and rookie Curt Costin. They both have Ironman experience.

The logistics involved in such an event is quite astonishing, and the day started with the mountain bikes being dropped prior to start time not far from Caboolture. Headquarters (HQ) was located at Woodford, and it is here we receive our maps just an hour before the race begins. In the remaining time before we start we must plot our course, pack food and clothing into plastic tubs to be dropped at certain pre-determined points. To say it is frantic is an understatement.....

We were told to be ready to start by 11:00am. To keep us guessing the race organisers put us on a bus and shipped us off to the REAL starting point at the Scout Camp near Kurwongbah for a 12:00pm start. It is amazing to watch 50 teams of 3 all head in completely different directions at the start, all with the same goal of getting to the finish at Woodford within 24hours. The next hour or so would see us collecting checkpoints on foot at a frantic pace and leaving us not far from Petrie. We then inflated the kayaks and paddled into Petrie. All the teams use the same type of kayaks in an attempt to create parity. This leg required a lot of portaging (carrying/dragging) of the kayak as the water level was low. Once at Petrie we deflated and packed the kayak in order to carry it to our next leg which was a Train ride from Petrie to Caboolture. You heard it.....Just picture how stupid you look wearing lycra, carrying a deflated kayak and 3 paddles walking through Petrie and Caboolture.....

The remainder of the paddle was relatively uneventful except for when I whacked Curt in the head with my paddle (sorry Curt!!!!), and by about 5pm we were mounting our MTB (Mountain Bikes). The first ride would be 28km and would take us from Caboolture and up the back side of Mt Mee via Campbells Pocket Rd. For those of you that know that area would be aware that this is very cruel country, however, once we hit the ridge and the Heritage Trail things started to look better. The ride to the next run took 2 hours and gave us spectacular dusk and night views of the glasshouse mtns. We were given the map for the next short run leg when arrive at transition 2. This meant literally planning on the run. This leg was only about 6-8km, however, the time taken to complete it ranged from 1:30 to 4:30. The check-points were deep in the scrub and this meant a lot of bush bashing to find them and resulted in my legs looking like they lost a fight with a whipper snipper!!!! What made it more difficult was we were by this stage deep into darkness.

We arrived back at transition 2 after spending 2 hard hours in the scrub, had a quick feed and headed out for the next 20km MTB. This was relatively uneventful but some teams made a meal of this leg. We took 1:17 while some teams took over 3 hours. Route selection was very important in this leg! We arrived at the transition 3 for the last run leg to find we had moved from 15th up to 4th and were only 8 minutes behind 3rd. We were now in Pine Forrest Plantations not far from Beerburrum. We pushed really hard all the way through the run, and even though we were almost 12hrs in, the pace was fast! Leaving transition 3 for the last time for the 17km ride to home (Woodford) we had failed to make up much time, and it remained status quo for the remainder of the race. One of the high points on the home leg was the 3km downhill road section with visibility of 2 metres due to the fog. What a rush!

Once in town we were greeted by some young locals giving us the 'moon'. It is after 1am mind you, so we wished them good night and continued to the Woodford show grounds and the finish. I doesn't matter how long you are out there or how fast you go it still feels good to finish. It was a great result from our team - Hardtale.com - QLD, finishing in a touch over 13hrs, 4th overall and 1st in the All Male Category. At this point, all you are looking forward to is a hot shower. By 2am we were clean and warm for the first time in 14hours and the three of us were salivating over a homebrand cup of packet chicken noodle soup. It is amazing how good something so simple can taste so good!!!!

In summary, Adventure Racing is not just about who is the fastest, it is about who is the fastest AND the smartest and manages all the obstacles put in front of them by the race organisers and the wonderful environment in which you traversing. My team mates and I covered the course in 13 hours which involved approximately 65km Mountain Biking, 14km of Kayak-

ing and 30km of running.

If you have any questions about this and any other AR topic, please do not hesitate to ask me and I can point you in the right direction. Take care and thanks for reading!!!

**Mark Bowring (Bowser)**

