

HardTales in the Wild

Hidden Valley Cycle Epic - September 2005

Last weekend I competed in the Hidden Vale Cycle Epic, a 100km MTB from Toowoomba to Hidden Vale (near Rosewood/Ipswich), I rode very well, too well. I seeded myself at the front of the amateur pack (they split the race into the "Classic" category, for the pro's to go for the money, and the "Challenge" for those of us less talented), and rode hard through the technical section that forms the first 28k, then paced myself over the "razorback", a 3k/1000ft climb. At the 50k mark I lucked out and arrived at the checkpoint just as the 50k event started, so was able to put myself into a good fresh pack of riders. We worked hard together over the next 25k to the next checkpoint, by which stage we'd culled our numbers to four (myself, another 100k rider, and two 50k riders). With 10k to go we'd pushed ourselves to the front, with a lone race leader a mere 200m ahead and flagging. It all looked good for a win or second at worst for our hero. This is where it went pear-shaped.

We'd ridden so fast that the event organisers hadn't yet posted marshalls at the final turn at 7k to go (we got there at about 4hrs 30min). Unfortunately the course had changed from the previous year, and the 50k guys convinced me that we were still on course. By the time I decided that we'd missed the turn, doubled back, and found the turn, the rest of the field were streaming in. I eventually finished in a time of 5hrs 40 min, with 115k on my odometer. Very disappointing, as we were on track for a sub-5 hour time. However I got what I wanted out of the race, being a good 100k of hard suffering practice, and nothing was really lost, as there are no prizes for the Challenge category, but a category win would've looked great on my CV!

Live and learn as they say, looking toward the Adventure race world championships Nov 14 in New Zealand, where it really counts. (see www.southerntraverse.com).

Ant

