

HardTales in the Wild

Team in Training - January 2005

Ever wondered how you would do in a 24 Hour adventure race? For the attendees of the Maximum Adventure Advanced Training weekend, wondering is a thing of the past.

Four enthusiastic first timers enrolled for a weekend of tuition and torture in the beautiful Myall Lakes region under the guidance of none other than HardTale's own Angry Man. In the weeks leading up to the event, Angry offered nutrition and equipment advice as well as some basic pre race training pointers. Friday afternoon involved a brief kayak session including boat set up and deep water rescue techniques. Friday night was spent completing kit checks and bike set up. Saturday morning was devoted entirely to map marking and route selection. To cap off the weekend, the Team in Training (Brett Sparkes, Pieter Verwey, Rob McManus and Carl Bryant) competed in the Maximum Adventure 24 Hour race. With 33 teams out for the adventure, the mass start on Lake Bombah proved exciting as 48 bright yellow inflatable Seyvlor K79 kayaks belted downwind to the first of 20 checkpoints. Angry took a leisurely spin in his Mirage 22s and offered paddling and position pointers to not only the Team in Training, but anyone who would listen. After two hours and 4 checkpoints, the Team exited the water only to cast aside their paddles and kayaks and exchange them for flippers and boogie boards.

In an unorthodox, if not exciting twist, Gary Farebrother turned a 2km swim into a body board paddle. For those unused to flippers, the strain in the hip flexors and calves could be felt after about 250m, and that was just the beginning. A seven km run (carrying the body boards and flippers) brought competitors back to a final water crossing and TA2. Team in Training, despite a relaxed start in the boats, found themselves sitting about mid pack as they calmly changed into cycling apparel and prepared for a broken 85km off road ride.

A small nav error saw the team lose several places at a crucial time, and they arrived at the back of a small bunch to the abseil area. With teams arriving in close proximity to one another, the que for the climb and abseil slowly grew and the wait blew out in some cases to nearly 3 hours, but no one turned away! Leaving their bikes at the foot of a small mountain, teams donned climbing harness and chest ascenders before tackling a fun rope climb up a steep (in places vertical) ascent that summited a spectacular bluff. Team in Training arrived in time to catch the moon rise on the horizon, a brilliant red glow. To the west shone the lights of the township of Buladelah. Taking five to absorb the view was mandatory.

The abseil was a cracker and teams floated past a huge cave after dropping off an overhang. Pairing up was a good idea due to some minor rock slip, and it also helped if one person got into a spin. Unfortunately the end of the 70m abseil meant several more hours of riding hills for the Team, however they never once balked at the idea. The only thing missing was water

and thanks to some quick thinking and a borrowed mobile phone, Angry arranged that for everyone at the next checkpoint. By now it was well and truly dark and some of the team managed to sample HardTale's Min Min lights. The verdict, where can we get some?

The ride was broken up once more at a Rogaine stage. Here another twist was thrown in as each team member had a punch card ziplocked to their wrist. No more 'Roast Chicken' wrapped up on the side of the road in space blankets while strong team mates ran off to gather the points! Innovation like this evens out the playing field and is more than welcome. Ensuring all team members visited each CP on the Rogaine lead to some suspicious card punching, but it all evened out in the end and everyone left feeling happy.

The end of the Rogaine meant it was almost over and with a simple ride (24km on open fire road) leading teams back to their boats, Team in Training began to smile and enjoy the new day. Entering the water in near perfect conditions, the boys reclined in their seyvlor's and paddled home to complete the course in 22 hours and 29 minutes, almost 10 hours behind the winners, but early enough to place 11th outright and 4th in their category. Happiest of all was Angry, who managed to complete the race without a single cramp thanks to some fantastic new gear from LineBreak.

From all points, the training weekend had been a success and just finishing their first 24 Hour was a great buzz for the Team. For more details on how to participate, click on the contact us tab or visit www.maxadventure.com.au .

Angry Man

