

HardTales in the Wild

When in Doubt Read the Instructions - April 2005

Go to the map handout location which is marked on the map with an X. How simple is that?

Add the adrenalin rush of the wheelbarrow race at the start, the onset of dementure, folding the map to cover up the instructions and our first rogaine became an adventure in itself. Our team Hardtale .com aged care, comprised Greg Bacon (navigator) Gina Hetherington and our last minute replacement Simon Walsh in his first adventure race. Back to the rogaine.

We picked up a few checkpoints from the description list and being in the right place when teams sprinted past then stopped. The map that was simply meant to take us from the start to the map collection area had little crosses that I thought were the checkpoints but had no relevance to the rogaine. Simon looked at the map about 30 min after the start and made the comment that it was a bad map. We told him that normally the maps are just great and we couldn't understand what was wrong. We stopped another team and asked "Where did you get that great map?" That's when we unfolded the map and the big X told us where to go.

Unfortunately for us the map people had moved off to the next control. Still no map. After searching the South east corner of every car park including each level and every willow tree along the creek beds of the campus we called it quits and ran off to the bikes. By now we had already run about five kilometres which equalled my longest ever training run.

We started the bike leg in 90th place and had only gone around 200 m when Gina found that she could not change into Granny gear as her selector cable was crimped, a bad sign for the bike leg. We had our map well marked with distances noted to each control, this was a big advantage when other teams are going the opposite way or making the wrong turn. The bike leg was a blast on the fire trails, Simon fell at the bottom of one descent without too much damage and Gina's failure to use her breaks meant we set a good pace on the downhills. The bike carry sections of the Great North walk caused some bottlenecks but it was a good challenge. The last bike leg to TA2 was along a wide cycleway which was a real buzz pulling top gear most of the way. We were still passing some teams so this kept the momentum going for our team. Simon had the ability to push Gina all the way as I struggled at the rear. Twice on this leg Simon made the statement that "This is great!"

At TA 2 we were handed new maps which sent us south along the Lane Cove river and we

could pick up checkpoints in any order. The first 50 teams to TA 2 were to kayak down river to TA3 with the last 50 teams doing the rogaine first then bringing the kayak up river. This also seemed simple but as you run along the river bank while other teams are paddling in the same direction doubt again sets in. Read the instructions again, stick to the plan and ignore teams that are running in the opposite directions asking, why are you running in the wrong direction? At this point many teams didn't actually know the plan that the field had been split in half doing opposite legs.

It was great having a rogaine map clearly marked with all the controls. We ran and walked at a good pace on this leg and found all checkpoints. There were several teams going the same way now and we were all travelling at the same pace. We finally got to the Kayaks where we were told that there had only been four teams ahead of us on the kayak leg back up river.

We set off up stream and found the going slow until Simon got out of the rear luggage bay and got comfortable, Gina was our skipper for this leg and kept up a solid pace, we passed two teams on this leg and we were determined to keep our position. Apparently we had the 9th fastest kayak time. A short run back to the bikes saw the final leg of the race.

From TA 4 it was a short bike ride on bitumen where we left our bikes and transferred 3 checkpoints from a master map, then a short rogaine. Simon was still firing at this stage but Gina and I were definitely slowing by now. Back onto our bikes for the quick run home. It was great to cross the line to the cheers of those that had already finished.

Apparently this event was slightly longer than most of the sprints but our team thoroughly enjoyed the whole course. It was great to see the sportsmanship displayed when teams allow you through and the thank you that you get when you do the same to another team.

At the ripe old age of 53 I have become an adventure sports junkie and I have even taken up jogging after a 20 year break. I have some great team mates that also enjoy pushing themselves to the limits. For all those teams that don't make it to the podium it is still good fun with a great atmosphere.

We received a great prize (tool kit, complement's of Bike Addiction) for my great navigation work without the correct map, It was actually the idiot's prize but I'm not complaining. Thanks again to Tom and Alina for a great and fun event and I hope I am still up to the challenge next season.

Pa Egg