

Weekend Warp 4 Oct 2009

For those who know us, mental stability has always been a questionable issue. Thus it was off to the NSW Rogaining Championships some 60kms south of Oberon for 3 members of Team Fully Rad to the Power of Sick - with Heather having to work it was a case of Team No Filly Rad to the Power of Sick.

NSW Rogaining Association 2009 NSW Rogaining Championships

The Mt Werongaine 3-4 October, 2009

The location was Mt Werong, the far western side of the Blue Mountains National Park not far from Kanangra Walls, and with terrain to match. On offer were two options. You could either spend up to 15 hours of the 24 hour period on the course or you could do the full 24 hours. Working on the familiar theme that if there is an easy option and a hard one, we always choose the latter, we left the campsite at midday Saturday and spent the next 24 hours torturing ourselves.

Firstly the weather. The previous week when the hardy souls put the checkpoints out, it was snowing.

The forecast was for somewhat warmer conditions for us but reality was it was still bitterly cold. At 3am on the top of a ridge with the wind chill factor, the official 4.6 degrees in Oberon was much lower here. Added to this the rain fell constantly, not heavy but just enough to keep you wet with frozen fingers, chattering teeth and shaking hands. So if the picture I paint is not a particularly comfortable one and you think we would all prefer to be tucked up in a nice warm bed, you are 100% correct.

Secondly, Rogaining. We are new to this sport with Richard & Rob having done just the one 12 hour event and Pete zero. We are using it as training for the XPD next May and it is a big learning curve for us all.



The previous weekend when the course was set



The briefing with VRA Wilderness Rescue vehicle on standby

Following the briefing session, the start is announced and we are off with a group to Checkpoint 20, a gravel pit. No problem there, easy find and we aim cross country for 24. Through stupidity, we miss it and run into 30 instead. Talk about not paying attention, not looking at the terrain, not checking distances, etc, we got it all wrong but at least a good early wake up call in simple terrain to make us focus.



Pre Start & Cold Already

So we backtrack & logged 24 before heading east to the road and then south to easily account for 22. We continued south east along the aptly named Mt Fatigue Fire Trail and took the spur down to 72 and back out again without incident.

Whilst 34 was only about 400 metres off to the side, we were not enticed due to the terrain and saw 66 as a better option. All along Richard & I had been sharing the one marked up map and as we headed in I unknowingly dropped it. About 5 minutes later I asked Richard where it was? Whilst we had another, it was not marked as well so we decided to look for the proverbially needle in a haystack. We allowed ourselves ten minutes and as we returned unsuccessfully back down the hill, Richard found it! Very relieved we continued on to 66 and then followed the river system to 64, 85 and 92. Ironically, just short of 85, we found a map dropped by another team!



As darkness closed in, we made it up the hill and down the spur to 94 where we put our trusty Ay-Up lights on. Two other teams were in the vicinity at this point and we watched one head east over a large hill whilst the other travelled along the river as we did, all heading for 83. When we thought we were at the right spot, we headed left uphill. It was a hands & feet climb up a loose, rocky and very steep slope to the checkpoint where we met the team who had gone over the hill. They said their way was also tough going to the extent that they then opted to go east down the spur before heading west back up the next spur to 77. We on the other hand slid & scrambled back down the way we had come and then ever so slowly trudged up the side of the hill and on to the saddle. It was very eerie up here with a fog like mist reducing visibility right down and we were glad to claim that one and head out to the water point.

Here we refilled, refuelled and put on more clothes, all in the cold and constant drizzle. It was then off down the spur to 55 and cross country to pickup the river system to direct us up to 74. Leaving that we again went along the river and diverted up the spur for 49. Back on the river we were unsure if a gully to the east was the one leading to 101 but decided to keep heading south as we could also come in from the creek system to the south. This is what we ended up doing but we missed the last small tributary and ended up coming in up the spur from the east. A tad convoluted but there's nothing like 100 points in one hit to put a smile on our faces.



The maximum 100 points - just after midnight

A direct route to 67 looked dangerous from a navigation angle so we followed the river system back around and came along the Abercrombie River, a very popular spot for Wombats. Our intention was then to follow the river further south and come out along Parliament Creek near 78. However, we crossed onto the western bank and confronted with several gullies, chose not to go up and down but followed the ground up a ridge and eventually came out onto Parliament Creek Road at the creek below 42 - if we had realised how close we were to that one we could have nabbed it whilst in there.

Undaunted, we headed down the road and claimed 78 before heading in to 93 around 3am. Tired, and confronted by cliffs, a waterfall, and seemingly the only way out being the way we came in, we retreated and rather than attack from another angle, decided to head for the All Night Café. On the way we could have tried for 42 and/or 27, but fatigue and the weather were taking their toll and our focus was for food, warmth, and the opportunity to rest a while and recharge our batteries.

After about 1 hour in the company of the 1st Waitara Scouts, their warming food and magical fire, we left as the morning dawned. We felt mildly refreshed and headed up the road and in to 48. Easy enough but on leaving we followed the contours with one of us (me) misreading the compass and had us heading south instead of north to the road. With this error corrected we turned and finally hit the road but we had lost any momentum gained from our break.



Still, 69 beckoned and it was an easy in and out as was 33, both down a spur to the target and back out again. Then came 56. I have marked a route on the map of what we potentially did but irrespective of the accuracy, the end result was we spent quite a while in the area but still did not find it. Deflated we headed out and up the road for an easier 32 and then over Mt Werong to claim 31.

We figured we still had enough time for 35 but initially missed the single track turn off and then ultimately could not find it either, again the accuracy of the track on the map is a guess only. Not wanting to finish on such a low, we headed in for 21. During the brief it was mentioned this may be tricky so we focused hard, measured distances, counted steps,

took a bearing to back up the track and went straight to it. Saving grace and it at least picked up our spirits a tad.

With half an hour to go, we decided 25 was just under 1.5kms and we would potentially risk a time penalty, not something we were prepared to do. So it was on to the finish line and to complete the formalities. It was interesting to be told our points total and then be asked if we thought that was correct - we had absolutely no idea how many we had accumulated but other teams at the time seemed to know exactly.

Overall we were very pleased with our efforts. After an ordinary start, we settled down and went well in the daylight and most of the night. Fell apart a bit as fatigue set in and well aware in the last nine hours we only claimed 210 points. Still, our total of 1290 placed us 3rd in the Male Veterans Category & 8th outright which for our inexperienced group was very rewarding and a great learning experience.

Our thanks must go to the dedicated group who put this event together. Their tireless efforts over many weeks included selecting the location, designing the course, field trips, hanging and then vetting the checkpoints, mapping, administration, etc. Despite the weather it all culminated in a fantastic weekend that saw us all pushing the boundaries and enjoying ourselves whilst they continued with their tasks to ensure a very smooth and well run event. Much appreciated and whilst the muscles are sore and the bodies still tired, we have at least warmed up and will undoubtedly return to future rogaining events.



Mount Werri

- 32 The shallow gully
- 33 The watercourse junction
- 34 The spur
- 35 The spur
- 36 The spur
- 37 A knoll
- 40 The spur
- 41 The spur
- 42 The watercourse
- 43 The spur
- 44 The spur
- 45 The watercourse junction
- 47 The saddle
- 48 The watercourse
- 49 The spur
- 50 The watercourse
- 51 The spur
- 52 A saddle
- 53 The spur
- 54 A saddle
- 55 The spur
- 56 The spur
- 57 The saddle
- 58 The gully
- 60 The watercourse junction
- 61 The spur
- 62 The watercourse junction
- 63 The spur
- 64 The watercourse junction
- 65 The spur
- 66 The watercourse junction
- 67 Junction of the wic and a gully
- 68 The spur
- 69 The spur
- 70 The watercourse, east bank
- 71 The watercourse junction
- 72 The watercourse junction
- 73 A knoll
- 74 The watercourse
- 75 The spur
- 76 The spur
- 77 The saddle
- 78 The spur
- 79 The spur
- 80 The spur
- 81 The watercourse
- 82 The watercourse junction
- 83 The spur
- 84 The spur
- 85 The spur
- 90 The gully
- 91 The watercourse junction
- 92 The watercourse
- 93 A saddle
- 94 The watercourse junction
- 100 The watercourse junction
- 101 The spur
- 102 The watercourse junction

W1 Track, NW side
W2 Track, W side
W3 Track, E side
ANC Track, N side

Scale 1:25000
Kilometres 0 0.5 1 1.5 2
Contour Interval 10m

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NSW Rogaining Association



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