

Race Report – 45th Paddy Pallin 6 Hour Rogaine from the winners

The 45th Paddy Pallin 6 Hour Rogaine was held on the Newnes Plateau north of Lithgow with a bumper crowd of over 600 competitors. Andy and I had never rogained together before, but given our recent Adventure Racing experience we knew team-work would not be a problem. I set-up camp the night before and braved the cold, friends, campfire and marshmallows to keep warm during the night. This should have led to ample time to organise ourselves in the morning and work out the best course, but in the end we only started looking at the course 30min prior to the race. But this was enough, and although we knew we were not going to pick up many points early in the race, we would finish strong, perhaps only recent injuries our potential downfall.

We started at a conservative speed, heading out to the north-western corner of the map, picking up controls 31 and 63 on our way out to the out and back loop in that corner. No real problems although we ran straight past control 24 as we chatted away, conscious enough that we could pick up the point on the return back past. We picked up 5 controls in the first hour, easily our worst hour but expected. Some absolutely gorgeous views and a super cool run in a canyon, it's a pity more teams didn't get out there (control 80).

The second and third hours we picked up the pace and only stopped after 1.5 hours for a quick feed. Picked up 7 and 10 controls in those hours, running the south-west corner and then looping back in towards the hash house (up as far as control 48). During the second hour we noted a particularly fast uphill running team that looked quite intimidating, and perhaps it was that sight kept our pace so high over the next few hours. We started altering our course in the third hour, but the whole race, the only changes we made were adding on extra controls.

By this stage we were well aware that this was going to be a super fast rogaine, and with carpet-laden pine forests and plenty of tracks, Andy's choice of his Brooks Trance, with that bit of extra cushioning were going to keep his knees all good for the entire race. Kept the pace well for the fourth hour and spiking every control on what was quite an easy navigational course. Our confidence reached the point where we were willingly taking on 2km legs straight through the forest, and coming out within a few metres of where we had intended. During the fourth hour we headed back to the southern tip of the map and managed to keep moving well up and down some of the steeper slopes out that way. Right on 4 hours we sat at a water stop for our first and only decent feed out on the course.

Fifth hour was still solid, kept picking up controls but this included our worst bush section (in terms of not as pleasant to run in – at least I tested my Brooks Adrenaline ASRs with some tougher bush) and our worst mistake (about 2 min looking in a parallel gully). Most of this hour was spent heading north to the east of the HH, but west of the big canyon. In the sixth hour I started to tire, and started to make navigational errors, except they weren't errors because Andy was on top of his game and picked up on all my little wobbles before they became a mistake. Having spent 15min or so stumbling over

rocks and sticks, I hit the wall at 5.5 hours. A couple of minutes of food and drink though, and we got going again, running strongly to the finish.

We had a cracking race really and we were able to keep the pace high the whole way. We measured our route with a string and ruler as being just over 46 km for our 2590 points. All in all a pretty nice day out running through the forest in what for us was a pretty faultless rogaine. While it was my first win in the Paddy Pallin (2 attempts), Andy now holds the record for the most number of wins (with his often team-mate Rob Preston).

Thanks to the organiser for putting on another great Paddy Pallin race, surely everyone out there enjoyed it!

Ben Rattray and Andy Hill
Team No. 34

