

Team Husband and Wife - Rogue 24 Race Report

With three young children, team Husband and Wife are fortunate to compete in one or perhaps two Adventure Races each year, so when the opportunity came up to race in the 2014 Rogue24, we quickly jumped at it.

Studying the maps on Saturday morning, we quickly realised this would be a more challenging event than the traditional Adventure Races that we were accustomed to. The Rogue 24 format was a real 'choose your own adventure', route choice, optional check-points and more challenging navigation made for an almost overwhelming number of options. At one point during map preparation I looked at my wife and said, 'I am not sure where to start with these maps!' After a few hours of head scratching, it seemed obvious that the Stage Three Trek would be very tough, while the 107km bike stage would be our best opportunity to collect some points.

The Valley of Diamonds provided a stunning backdrop for the Stage One trek. The leading teams disappeared into the gorge at an impressive pace and we were content to play follow the leader, picking up CP's 1-5 along the way. The creek line was the only route choice and scrambling up and down some very large boulders was good fun, although this came to an abrupt end as we approached CP6. Michelle lost her footing and landed hard in the rocky creek bed, hitting her knee and twisting her ankle in the fall. A few panadol and a roller bandage later, we were moving again..... she has a much higher pain threshold than I do! We were quite pleased to nail CP's 8 and 9 without too much trouble and despite running out of water, decided to clear the stage. Kudos to the Tiger Adventure boys and Mass Nutrition who swept the stage in under 3hrs 50mins, it took us over 5!



After guzzling down a few litres of liquid, it was nice to be off our feet for the Stage Two Kayak leg. The sun setting over the hills surrounding Lake Cressbrook made for a beautiful afternoon on the water. We found a comfortable rhythm and headed clockwise around the lake, carrying the big red tub across a 80m section of land between CP14 and 16. We must have been enjoying ourselves during this paddle as we decided to continue on under lights to collect all CP's. The results show that most teams took approximately 3 hours to sweep the paddle course, it's hard to get those boats to move much faster than 6km/h. As we collected CP's 22 and 21 at the southern end of the lake, the headlamps scattered around the shoreline told us that many teams were well into the next trekking stage. We started to question our choice to sweep Stage One and Two, were we a long way behind or had the other teams skipped CP's? The beauty (and challenge) of this event is you never really know!



It's fair to say that our Stage Three Trek was an absolute shocker, poor route choice and planning were the two big issues. Despite wandering aimlessly for 3 hours, we collected a mere 200 points hitting the more straightforward CP's of 24, 28, 30 and 27. Looking back over the map and chatting with some very helpful and more experienced navigators post race, we would certainly do things differently.... the only good decision we made during Stage Three was to get back to TA and swap our runners for cycle shoes.

The bike leg is usually our strongest, it's the main thing we like to do that you might call 'training'. With 1610 points on offer, the 107km ride would give us an opportunity to catch up to those 'better orientated' teams that were now well ahead of us. Despite an early error on route to CP31 (yep, the first CP of the stage!!!!), we found our rhythm on the many long hill climbs and slowly started reeling in a few teams. While our route choice could have been better, this stage suited us as it seemed more dependant on fitness than navigation or technical bike handling. Feeling quite good, we had planned to collect all bike CP's, but the 30 points on offer for the 2km climb up to CP45 definitely wasn't worth the effort. We collected all other points and thoroughly enjoyed the downhill run back to race HQ along Perseverance Dam Rd. The other highlight during the bike leg was spotting a Bilby scampering along the side of a trail, apparently there is less than a thousand remaining in the wild!



We arrived back at HQ at 7:30am on Sunday morning, plenty of time to knock off the Stage 5 Kayak which we estimated would take 2 hours and then make some decisions after that. The kayak paddle seemed the best use of the remaining few hours with the most points on offer, however the rock hopping on route to the creek junction at CP62 reminded Michelle just how sore and swollen her ankle and knee had become. We collected all the paddle controls, with the hardest part of this stage being the portage to and from the pontoon. The only thing worse than paddling a heavy sit on top plastic kayak..... moving such a beast!



Arriving back at HQ, the two most appealing options (given the injuries and our now somewhat fatigued state) were the SUP boards and archery. Both sounded like a bit of fun and certainly a first for us in an adventure race. By this stage our 3 young children had arrived at HQ and it was nice to have them cheer us on as we played 'Robin Hood' at the archery range. We walked back up to the Rotunda with the kids at 10:15am and without much thought decided that we would 'call it a day', a decision that we later regretted. I'm not sure if it is the same for all competitors, but the drive home after most adventure races is filled with the 'what if' questions. What if we had of ??? As Liam said in a recent blog post, perhaps that is the attraction of this sport, the allure of the perfect race.

A huge thank you to Liam and his army of volunteers who provided all of us with an incredibly well run, enjoyable and challenging event. If we can convince 'Nan and Pop' to enjoy some quality time with their grandkids next April, we would love to line up again at the Rogue 24.

Chris and Michelle Delaney
Team Husband and Wife