

Really a Race Report



Before



After

Team *Really?*'s aim was to get the wooden spoon, and sort of got there – These are notes of a True Adventure – a Journey with an Uncertain Outcome....

Most people embarking on the Raid100 would have had some idea about what they were getting themselves into, having some skill and ability in expedition length racing or at least having raced a couple of 24 hour ones. Ken had, but not me. So, 100 hours, *Really?*

It turned out to be an Adventure with lots of sleep compared to other teams, lots of laughs, determination, fumbling around in transitions, some snaps, being lost and being completely stuck in the thick vegetation of the Clarence River.

I had heard stories about sleep deprivation, hallucinations, sleeping on the side of the road, which did not appeal to me. So Ken and I decided to take a hobbit-like – long-haul flight approach. It was going to be a Journey with an Uncertain Outcome – a True Adventure! living in the moment without worrying about how far the journey was, or how long it was going to take, as that would provide unhelpful distractions and detract from experiencing the beautiful wilderness that the Border County has to offer.

So the aim was to make it to the end in good shape whilst gaining experience and skill, which we lacked to be competitive. However, with that in mind it would still be a big undertaking. So, when Liam St Pierre's final pre-race email arrived I closed it about as quickly as I opened it, because it read:

- Trekking (62km - 155km) – both on and off-trail.
- Mountain Biking (262km – 355km) – on sealed and unsealed roads, tracks and fire trails.
- Kayaking (98km – 130km) – on flat-water and white-water rivers, lakes and open ocean.
- Navigation – challenging (quality, pre-marked, event-specific maps provided)

After a phone call with Ken I calmed down a bit, but still had no real clue as to how to prepare for this Journey.

Here is where Tamyka and Derek (Off Trail Adventure Tigers) came to the rescue on Good Friday–without them Ken and I would have stranded on day 2, without a doubt. Tamyka spent a lengthy session with me on the phone and I soaked up every little piece of information, typed them out in checklists of things to do, what to buy, what to eat, what to do and what not to do. This was

followed by a visit to Derek to get the right gear boxes and an extra stove.... Visiting Derek was very educational; what and how to pack, how to deal with rain, how to set up the bike, what a bivy bag looks like and many handy tips. Thank you Tamyka and Derek!

The next day Ken and I spent more time shopping than I had done in 29 years, whereby we visited all the outdoorsy shops in the Valley for bits and pieces including bivy bags, food and gas bottles.

Meeting all the teams at Gold Coast Recreation Centre was great. There were some old friends to meet and we were bunked up with two other great Kiwi teams: the Andy and Blair from Adventure Racing Cormandel and Anna and Leigh from Fuse Creative!

Race briefing was very exciting; the maps weighed a tonne, a true reflection of the long Journey ahead of us!

The first day was a bit confusing; as a runner, being advised to walk feels weird, but so the race started with a trek. During the second stage, on the MTB, we met Jan at the waterside and did the optional paddle at sunset. Back on the bike, I realised that I had never ridden trails at night, so that was exciting! Ken patiently let me gain some experience and by Friday night I was reading the maps while riding uphill and bombing down the beautiful Razorback and Border Ranges, really enjoying riding at night.

I love the way the body kindly adapts to what you ask it to do. I have the philosophy that your body is your friend, you never punish it, and you look after your 'vessel' so that it feels loved, nourished and looked after, and if you feel you punished it, you apologise and let it recover.

Day by day Ken and I felt stronger, except for the skin on our bums, after being almost continuously in the saddle for about 230+ kms. So, on Saturday morning it was really great to 'fang' it into Transition Area 6, because the quicker you go, the sooner the pain goes away.

Doing so, we passed a team that almost seemed to be standing still. However, when the same team came into transition a little while later they were very well organised and left the transition within a flash while we were still fumbling with all sorts of gear. Transitions were definitely our weakest point and is something to work on!

I loved the format of the Rogaine Expedition Length Adventure Race – you never know how many points other teams have when you meet out on the trails. They may be a top scoring team or a team that is just hanging in there to complete the Journey. Being able to optimise time and therefore point scoring within each stage is impressive skill to have.

The Clarence River was beautiful by night; switching off the headlights, being guided by the stars and the reflection on the water was such a great experience.

Also, the creatures of the night were very interesting – spiders, frogs and toads with their green eyes, snakes who seek the warmth of the trail and the millions of moths on the river, which was like watching the snow on a television screen without reception. At times I could not see anything but moths, with the added complexity of trying to breath moth-free air.

The treks were beautiful and I liked making our way through a riverbed to the Clarence River. But my favourite part was the long ride at night over the Richmond, Razorback and Border Ranges.

Whilst we would have loved to see the beautiful views, it was just great to get up these whopping big hills and riding down them again.

Every sport has got its quirky bits. For adventure sports this seems to revolve around war stories of sleep deprivation and hallucinations. It was funny to see the teams in bivy bags, looking like orange body bags, on the side of the road, having their naps. Some teams seemed to manage their sleep well, others perhaps not so.

We could have done with a little less sleep apart from the last night. The 5.5, 7 and 3.5 hours of sleep during the first 3 nights were great, but we had to press on during the last night and only had two short sleeps of 40 minutes in the dark and 30 minutes when daylight broke, at which point I felt completely miserable; we found ourselves a nice spot of broken sticks and twigs to rest on and after 30 minutes all was good, until we had to think two thoughts in short succession in the Transition Area.

I could not wipe the smile off my face for the greater part of the event, I soaked it all up and was in awe of how well the event was organised and what you can do without wrecking your body, feeling stronger day by day, but perhaps that's a hallucination in itself!

A great thanks to Liam St Pierre for applying your vision, initiative, knowledge, experience and skill to put this awesome event together, and I know it takes the volunteers to make it happen, but your leadership is a great gift to the community of crazy rogainers and adventurers! Picking up the comments from others; it was a tough race – I have no comparison – I just loved it. I just hope that our next adventure race won't be boring in comparison...

Ken, I am so lucky that we found each other. Amongst many things, it's great to undertake and share these sorts of adventures with you, for which I am very grateful.

As a child I dreamt of being in the wild, completely immersed in nature. What is it about nature that makes you reset, mentally and physically? Before Easter I was tired and a bit snappy at times. Well, the Raid100 provided the right dose of Adventure and Nature Therapy to get me back to normal life in great shape, mentally and physically.

A few days after completing the Raid100 I am completely happy and bursting at the seams with energy. If you have seen the movie Michael, there is a funny scene where he has just fought a bull and is lying on his back telling the world he is completely happy. That's me! I am completely happy and have booked Ken and myself into the next Adventure.