



Rogue 24 race report – by Pierre Francois, Team No Detour 31.

April 28th 2013

<https://www.facebook.com/NoDetourAdventureTeam>

The story

Since I've started AR (adventure racing) in 2011, every year comes to a new challenge to me and I try to increase the race distance. I've started with sprint adventure races, then 12hrs and 16hrs so this year I decided to tackle something bigger: a 24hrs nonstop race. But which one? One of my favorite activities is to surf on AR websites and the Rogue24 came up as the ideal race to me: a 24hrs rogaine format, involving kayaking, trekking and MTB with plenty of route choices and where you can skip points without being disqualified. It seems to be an interesting race format where strategy is key, fairly different to the normal adventure races I've done so far. A brief chat around me to see if someone was keen to partner up, and Ross came with a big "yes". Great, we have three months to think about training and logistic. This includes flights from Sydney, buy a decent bike box, hire a car big enough to fit two bike boxes, book a cabin for the night before ... With great help from Liam about ideas on bike boxes and gear box, everything was going smooth until Ross injured his knee ☹️ We are quite close to the event and none of us is confident on how fast Ross will recover. Not good news at all. We are about a month to go, and the airfare has started to increase, but we decided to wait and see how Ross's knee will go.... Two weeks before the race, a very good friend of mine, Eric, told me he was keen to replace Ross. The race is on. I had raced on sprint events with Eric, and met him at the orienteering events but never on such a long distance. On top of that, Eric just came back from the Wenzhou Outdoor Challenge in China and competed against some elite teams such as Thule, Seagate or PeakAdventure. He is in very competitive mood and will make me push even more ...

Pre-event

We flew from Sydney to Brisbane on different flights; both arrived at 1.30pm on Friday, the day before the race. Even though I was a bit scared of having my gear boxes broken, they survived the brutal handling at both airports and as per the plan, they both fitted in a Toyota corolla hatchback rented from Hertz, quite a cheap rental in the end.



For those interested by the bike box, I've bought mine from <http://envirobikebox.com.au/>

Happy with that, we drove 2hours up to the Imbil region and found the trip quite pleasant, chatting about Wenzhou outdoor challenge and the Chinese race fantastic organization, the gear we brought with us and the goals and strategies to adopt for the race. We stayed overnight at the Borumda deer park, a family style camping about 3km away from the race. We decided to select the cabin option since I had a terrible experience with camping before a race (which involves rare prep in the darkness, finetune a bike etc). Overall a luxury solution but it was definitely worth it.

At 10pm, the gear box was packed with gear for the bike, plenty of liquid food and electrolyte, dry clothes. Bikes were mounted and fine-tuned... Euh, well not so sure for Eric's bike. He managed to lose his chain on his trip back from China and had to use a brand new chain which obviously didn't fit very well with the old cassette Grrr, I was aware this is the sort of thing that always happens with Eric but let's hope it will do the job tomorrow. We finished the day with a massive dinner, Eric's favorite dish: pasta topped with French omelette, minced beef, tomato and parmesan! But eating in front of him was very funny: I never saw someone eating such a quantity of food!!! ☺ Good on you mate!

Pre-Race

7am, I am off the bed after a pleasant but chilly night. Quick breakfast, we have to go to the bike drop location, 15km away from the HQ. There, we asked some blokes if they had a spare and used 9-speed chain, without success. This chain thing is getting on Eric's nerves. We arrived at the HQ right on time to get the maps. Looking at them, it looks like stage 2 will be a massive MTB one: 80km with lots of hills, which sounds interesting especially because we will mostly do it in the dark. Stage 1 is a 20km paddle on the Yabba creek with some carry-your-boat sections and a 5km trekking in the middle. Stage 3 is a 18km trekking with challenging and spotless terrain and stage 4 is a 18km paddle on the Borumda dam, with some trekking involved as well (the opening time for that one will be 5.30AM, not a concern for us ☺). At that time of the race, I remember what Liam told me few months ago "no one has ever cleared the rogue, and it will probably be bis repetita this year". So I convinced Eric to skip CP23 and CP24 on the bike leg (worth 50pts) to save us time for the last kayak leg and collect the bigger points ... We both think that is smart, if no teams collect them all...



The future will demonstrate we were absolutely wrong because 4 teams cleared the race, in an incredible time.



Eric at the race briefing

Race – Stage 1

Midday, the game is on (yes, after all it is just a game). Some teams decide to skip the first CP1, worth 80 pts but most of them (like us) are running like angry bulls to it in direction of the dam. As a usual mistake in any adventure race kick off I've done, everyone is following the leaders thinking they know where they are going. I should have known this was the wrong strategy, and indeed the leaders brought the pack too far away and we all missed the check point 😊 On the way back, we found it but with congestion, and we were probably the last team (or close to) to punch it. Damn it, that is not a good start, at all.

We ran like hell to the kayak truck, but added extra distance to collect my piece of foam which I forgot at the start. Finally we are on the Yabba creek. The first km are quite pleasant, with teams full of energy and trying to keep up a good pace. Eric and I are not the best paddlers in the pack, but I can say we improved our skills a lot for the last two years. We easily found CP2 and CP3 and arrived at the water drop in a decent time and start the trek to collect two check points (worth 80points).

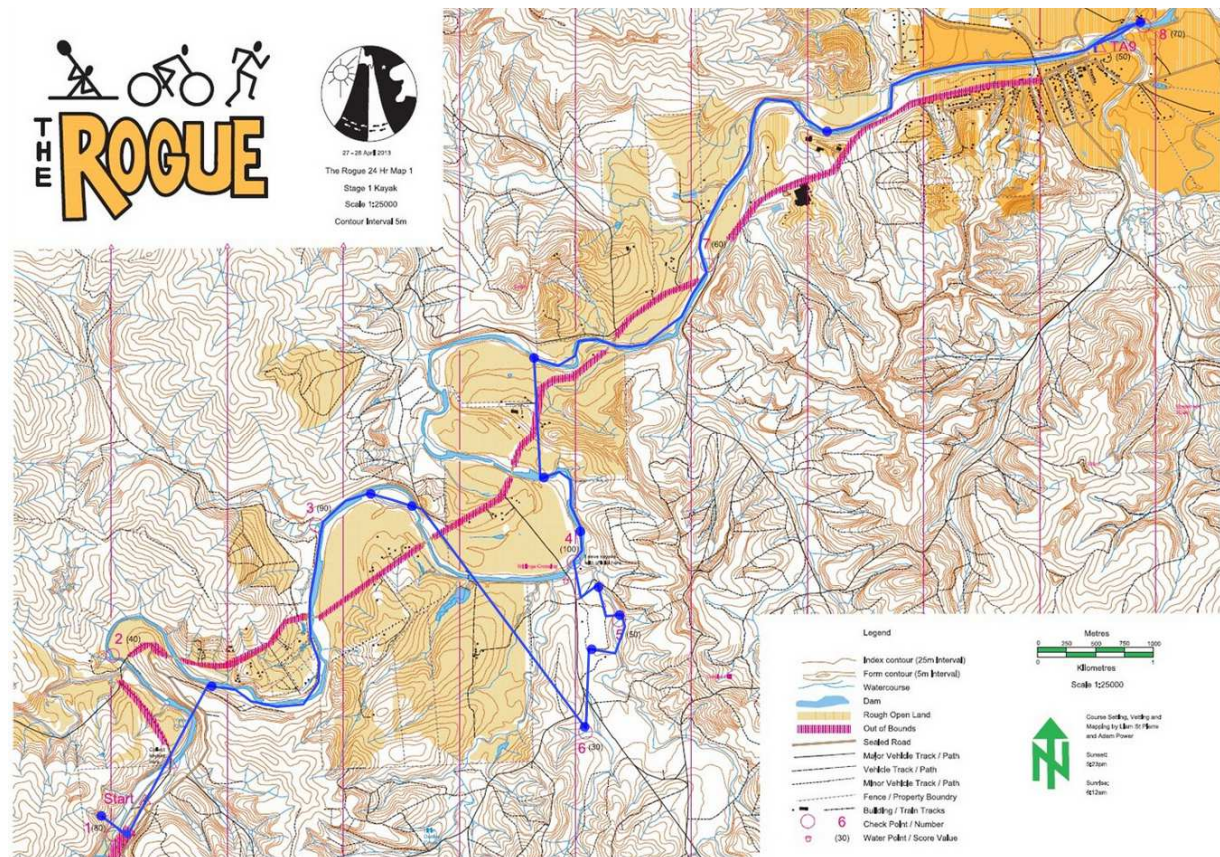


That's us in the background

Quite easy to find, we continued on the kayak but both of us felt we were going slower. Moreover, each new carry-your-boat section was getting harder and harder and we had to stop in the middle of each one ... There is something wrong!! We realized the kayak was full of water. Those kayaks have big holes to drain water but the main enclosure is just air and it looks like ours was leaky! We decided to stop on the river bank, say hello to an intimidate cow, remove the cap and wait the water to come out of the tank. To give you any idea of how much water we had inside it, we waited with the kayak vertical for 5 long minutes! Seeing us, some teams pulled out a bit further and did the same ahah. We finished at a much faster and appreciable pace than before and grabbed all checkpoints up to the end of the stage. It was a long paddle on slow kayak and I finished the last 4km with a cramp on the right forearm... Not a good sign assuming we will have 18km in stage 4, but that is in 12hours ☺



Checkpoint 8



Total stage 1 : 20km – 5h20min

Race – Stage 2

At the transition area, the marshal told us that we were in 19th position, quite far from the leaders (of course). Eric spent time to put a brand new chain provided by team 34 (you guys rock !). As I said, Eric is the kind of guy who does everything on the edge, but once again, it seems to work!. Our transition was longer than the plan (about 15 minutes longer) but it saved our race and was worth it... Fingers crossed, let's go up to the north side of the map and get the first CP11.

In the first km I realized how good progress on the bike Eric has made in the past months. In my memories I was quite good and our levels quite similar but today I struggle (a lot) to keep up to his pace. Kind of a worry ... Am I weak? Glad I left the orienteering leadership to him; at least I can concentrate on the pedals. We reached CP11 approximately in the same time as Team 3 KILA Spin City Cycle. We don't know yet, it is going to be the team we'll see the most over the race. By the time we reached CP10 then CP12, the sun was gone and we had an incredible time seeing the full moon rise. That was awesome! Then we struggled 10 minutes to find CP13, but arrived at CP15 then CP16 without troubles. We did the first 28km (northern loop) in 2h45.

Then we crossed the only sealed road on the map, refilled the tanks at the water drop and as fast as we can rid up to CP19. So fast that Eric fell on a bridge, and scared me because he fell on this brand new shoulder (he had a surgery about 6 months ago). No drama but that could have been worst. The end of the climb to CP19 was a push-a-bike section (for us), which we did with two other teams. What a view over there! It is shame we did it at night ☺

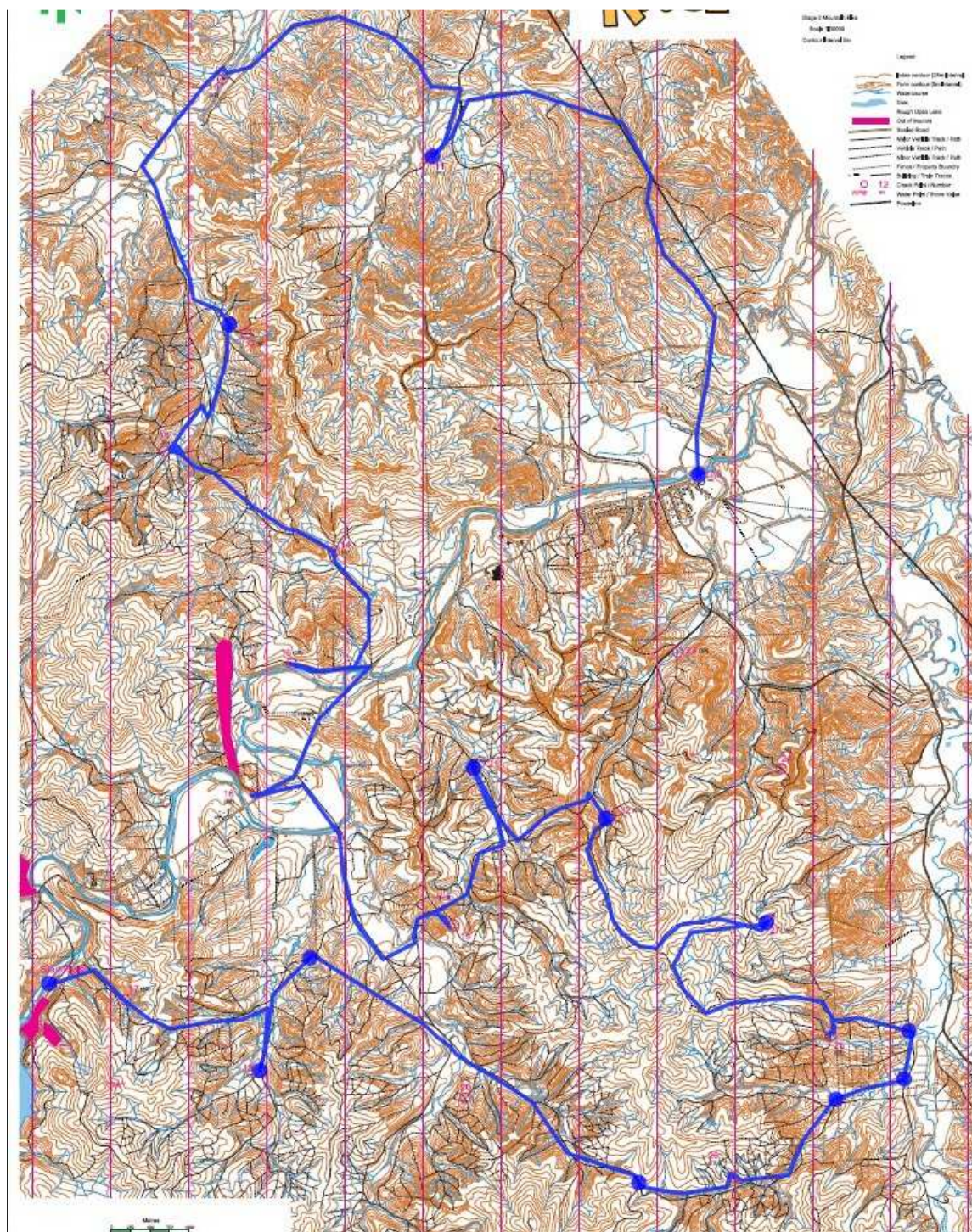


View from CP19

CP21, then CP22 and Eric asked me again if we wanted to collect CP23 and CP24. I hesitated but again, we decided to stick to the plan. Skip them.

Going to CP27 from the west side was epic. The firetrail was in poor condition, rocky and very very steep. That is when we realized that the map had 5m contour lines and 25m contour lines. We were obviously on a 25m section, that explains why this is so hilly!!! We pushed the bike for at least 15 minutes! At CP27, we saw again Team KILA Spin City as well as the two WanGoDo teams, obviously racing together.

CP25 shown us how weak was our English vocabulary. The control description says “log”.... What the hell is that? We spent 10minutes looking in the river but when team KILA Spin City came, they say in a beautiful French “ca veut dire arbre couche”. Of course, there was a massive tree blocking the track, I should have thought that could be what we called a log 😊 we moved on to CP26 and rid so fast we missed the track to CP20. A quick check on the map, and we found it 5 minutes after WanGoDo and Team KILA. But we took the firetrail option and arrived way before them at CP18. We finished the bike leg plenty of energy, at around 11.30pm, ranked 6th.





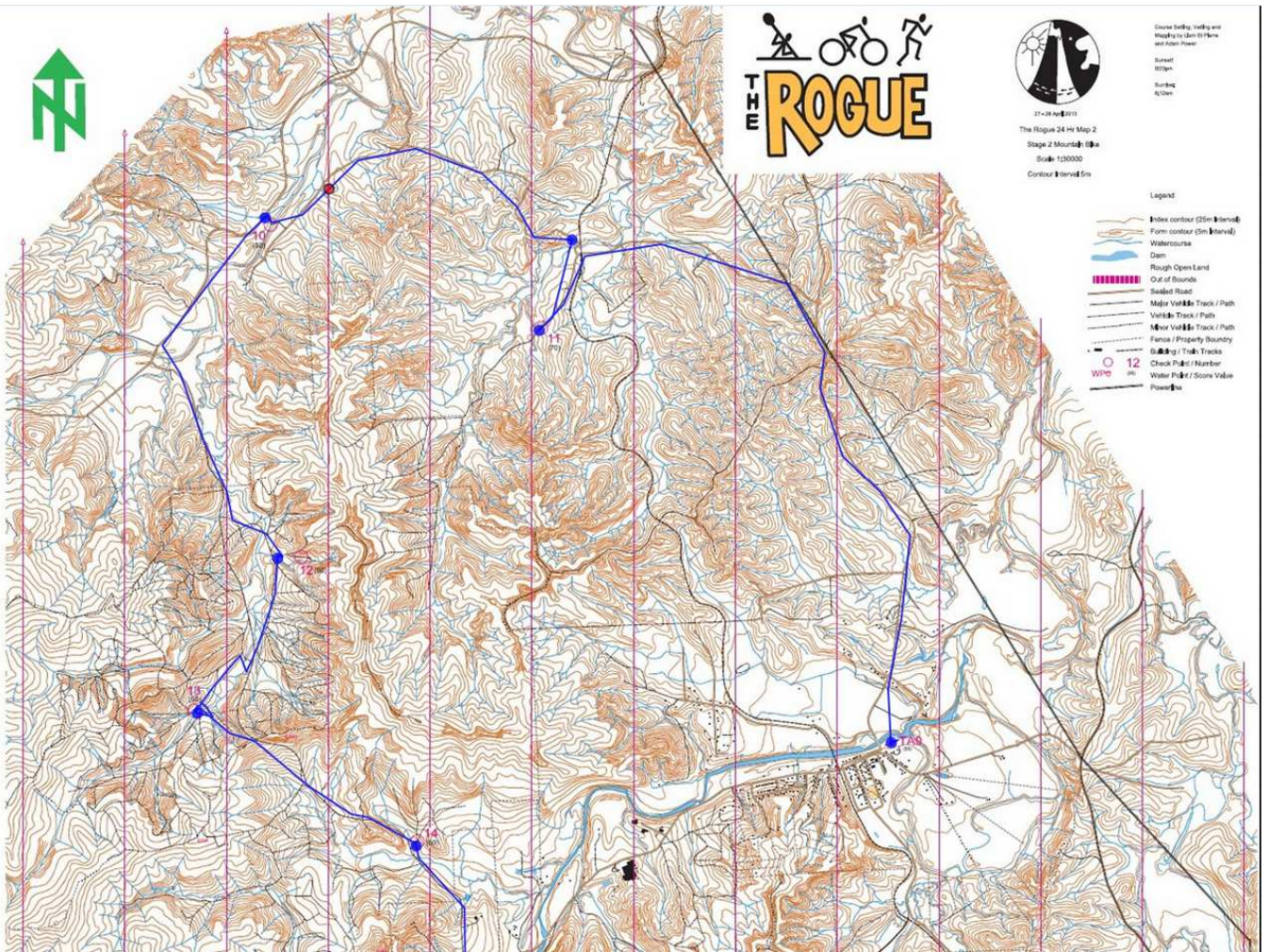
27-28 Nov 2013
The Rogue 24 Hr Map 2
Stage 2 Mountain
Scale 1:20000
Contour Interval 5m

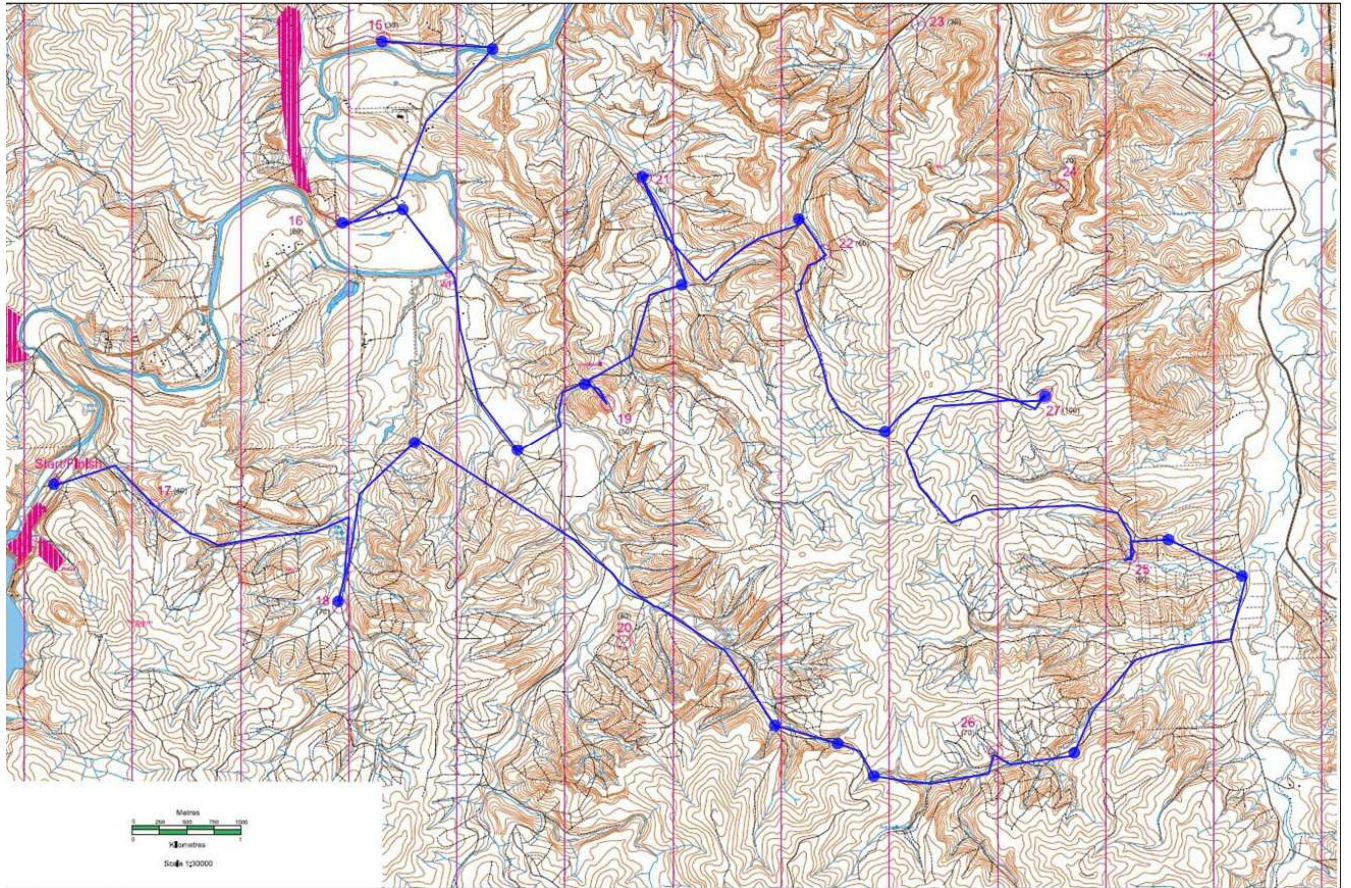
Course Setting, Mapping and
Mapping to User 10 Plans
and Admin Power

Sunset
18:00pm
Sunrise
05:00am

Legend

- Index contour (25m Interval)
- Form contour (5m Interval)
- Watercourse
- Dam
- Rough Open Land
- Out of Bounds
- Sealed Road
- Major Vehicle Track / Path
- Vehicle Track / Path
- Minor Vehicle Track / Path
- Fence / Property Boundary
- Building / Track / Tracks
- Check Point / Number
- Water Point / Score Value
- Powerline

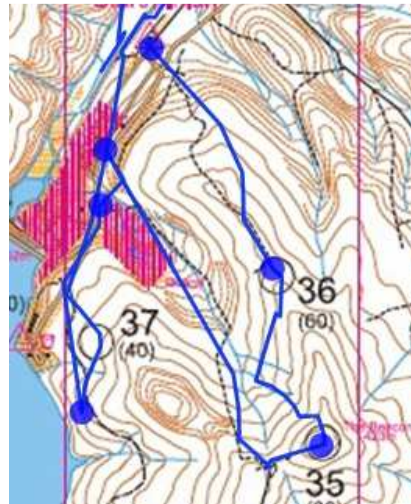




Total stage 2: 68km – 6h58min

Race – Stage 3

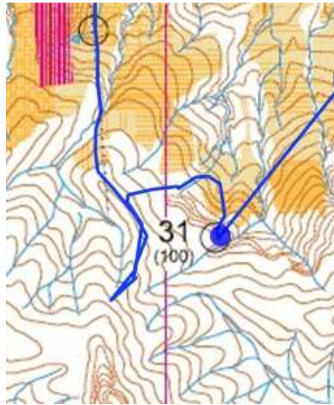
The stage to come should be one of our strong legs. Both of us are doing a lot of orienteering events, and we think our skills can make a difference. We started by the small loop on the south side of the HQ.



First checkpoint was CP36, at the end of a hilly track. Then we did a mistake because instead of staying on the top of the hill, we hit the creek and bush bash again to CP36 on a hilly and rough terrain. CP37 was the last one of the loop, and our original plan was to bush bash to west. Looking at the thick vegetation we decided to come down to the road and hit the CP from the track... Hmmm apparently it was not quicker this way....

Back to the HQ for a banana and a GU, we ran to start the second loop, on the northern side of the map ... much more challenging. CP34 in the thick vegetation took us 15min and then we decided to hit CP33 from the road, after the bend. The climb was ok and we found CP33 easily but we should have used the shortest path, from the track junction then through the open terrain.

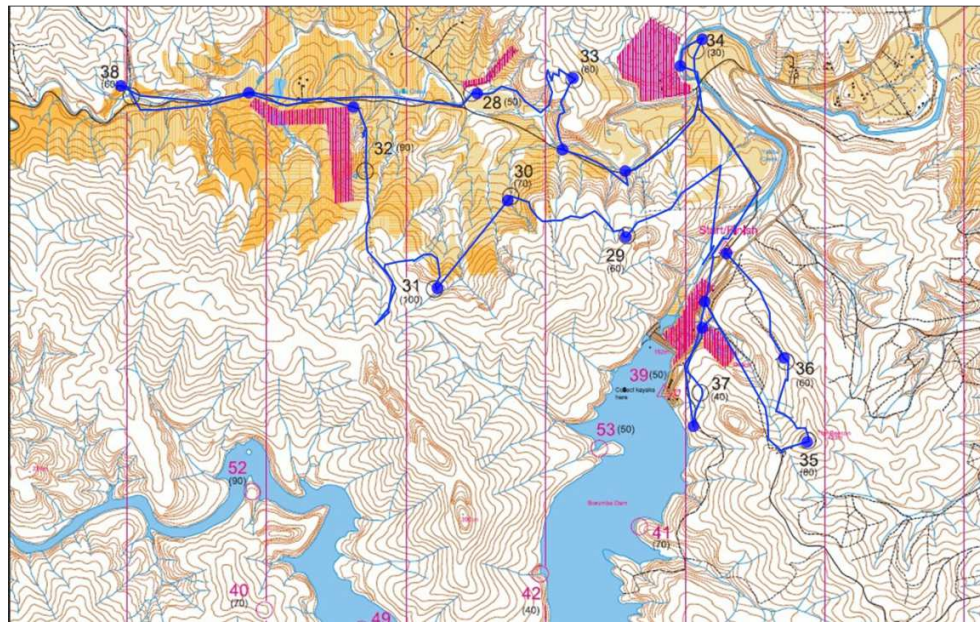
Our next target was CP28 but again our choice was not the best. Indeed we went through the thick bush instead of going back to the road from the same way we came up. Putain !, that bush was so thick I can't believe Eric managed to open the track without gaiters. It took us probably fifteen minutes to cross the thick area.... Again, time loss... CP38 and CP32 were easy and we know the most challenging point was about to come: CP31 worth 100pts. Our plan was to follow the fence from CP32 and at the end of it, do a bearing to the east.



We kept going, climbing up to a flat area.... That could have been the top of the hill and so the end of the fence but that fence was not finished yet. So we decided to stick to the plan, probably because we didn't want to be caught by the scale of the map. Keep going I said to Eric ! But that fence was still here, and we start to think that it was not mapped. We took the decision to come back to that flat area and hit east from there. That was risky but it worked! After few minutes in the valley we hit CP31 from the north, helped by the unmapped fence ☺ quite happy by the end of that epic trek, we finished the last two checkpoints full of energy. We finished the trek in a time which suits us, thinking not all teams will have collect them all...



Few shots at checkpoint 29



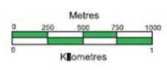
27-28 April 2013

The Rogue 24 Hr Map 3

Stage 3 Trek and Stage 4 Kayak

Scale 1:25000

Contour Interval 5m



Course Setting, Mapping and
Modelling by Sam St Pierre
and Adam Power

Sunset
18:30pm

Total stage 3: 22.8km in 6h54min

Race – Stage 4

At 6:40AM, we were on the kayak for the last stage of the race: an 18km paddle on the dam with some trekking sections. Personally I was not too excited by going onto the kayak again, but Eric brought his carbon paddles and that was probably the best idea he ever had during the weekend (mine was to bring a 10 cm thick foam☺) We paddled at a very good pace, and collected all CP anticlockwise. Furthermore, the proposed landscape with fog onto of the water was just amazing:



That's not us but we shared the same photoshoped panorama

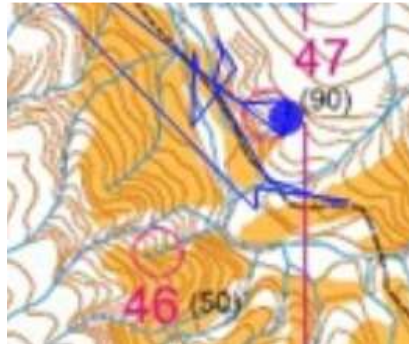


That's us !

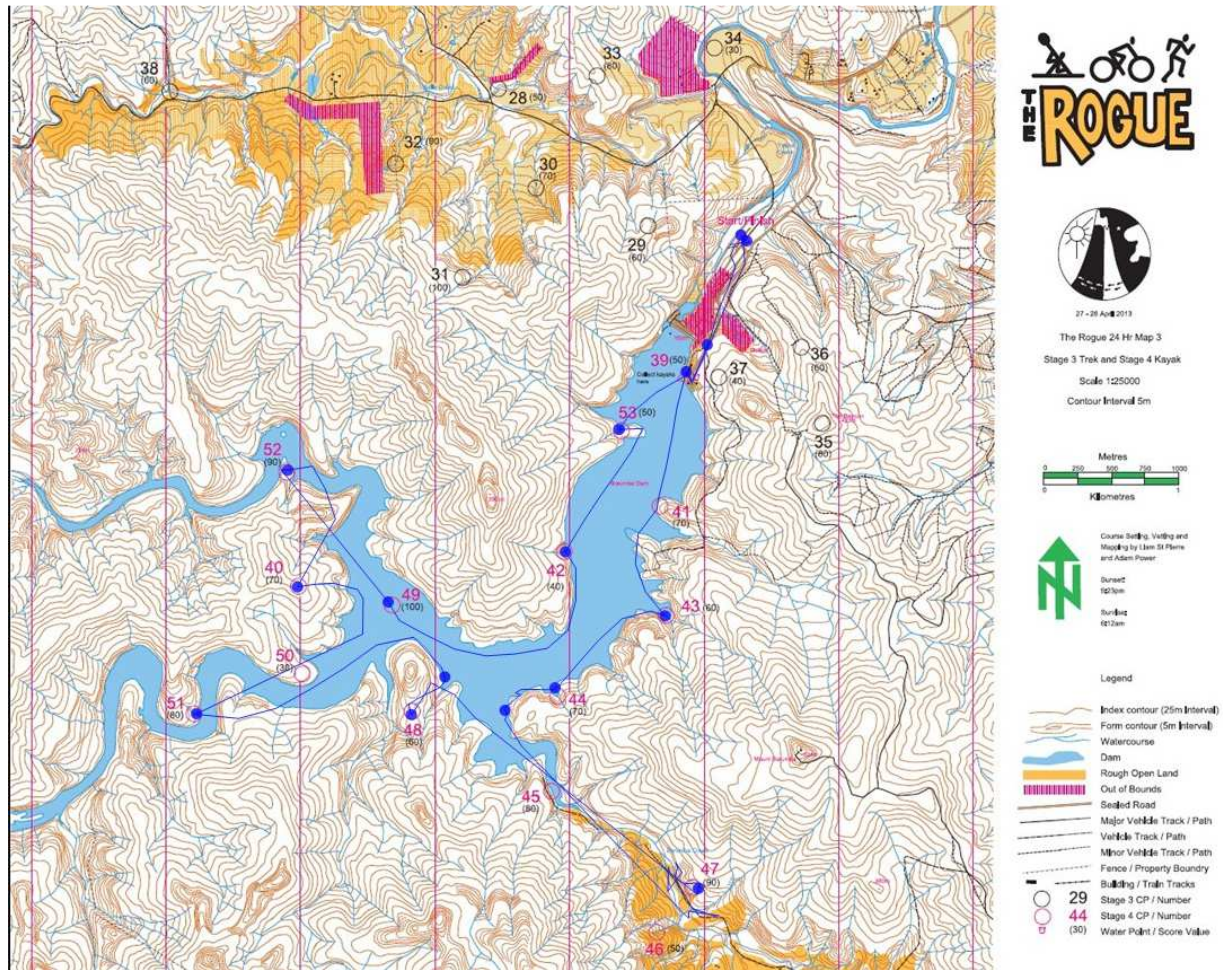
CP40 was a nice climb, and it looked like we still had fuel in the tank. Cool because the last trekking of the stage seems a bit longer.

We hit CP45 and ran into the river to CP47. The area was a flat and wide area, with grass and minors thickets, not too hard. We spent an hour there, part of it again with team KILA Spin City Cycle but couldn't find that CP, worth 90pts. Time was flying, so we decided to go and punch CP46. Our point of attack was to go up into the gully from the main river. It took us 5 minutes from there to find it, an easy one. Eric asked me the time, and it was 10.35am. So we decided to have another attempt on CP47, the

last one. We went to the junction between the obvious track and the Rocky River, took a bearing from there.



At the scale of the map, the CP should be between 150m and 200m. Usually I never do that but I decided to count the number of steps.... It should work, it has to. God damn it that checkpoint was not there.... Very frustrated, we decided to rush on the kayak and finish the stage and gave up on 90pts ☹. We punched the last few CP without troubles and ran to the finish line at 11.46am. We were hoping that other teams will have given up on that CP47 too, but apparently only KILA Spin City cycle and us didn't find it. Very strange, we were the last two teams there, around 10am and according to the nav lights, the last punch on those was around 9.30AM. Was the CP still there at that time? Was the CP at the exact location than shown on the map? We will never know but we would love to have feedback from other teams... Like if 90points were not enough, it appears that we both mis-punched CP46!! Worth 50pts ☹ ☹. Even if the sun was quite bright at that time of the day, we both saw the blinking red light but we have no way to proof we punched it (even the gps tracker lost the signal when we were in the gully)... What a frustration !.



Total stage 4: 21,7km in 5h36min

Overall, our official total is 3180pts, and we are ranked 11th / 45th; 8th in the open male category. Pretty good for a first attempt on the distance... But our real total is 3230pts, and we should have been ranked 9th. If we had found CP47, we would have been 5th with 3320pts. At least for the next time we know that we should triple check the punch ☺☺☺

Post-race

Four teams cleared the race, unbelievable. We haven't seen any of those teams during the race, but I assume they are just machines ☺ We covered more than 130km over the 24hours! Quite close to Liam estimation which means our route choice was the right one or close to. Again this was our first time on such a long distance and apart from the last two CP, Eric and I were very happy by our race and the overall weekend.

Thanks to ...

- ... Liam and his team for such a well-organized race.
- ... Ross who gave his spot to Eric (very fair from him)
- ... Celine for letting Eric compete on the weekend
- ... Pierre (myself) for having driven the car the whole weekend ☺
- ... Virgin Australia crew members to leave me sleep like a kid in the business class ☺
- ... to our sponsors, which we don't have (yet) ☺

Next year, we'll be back (at least myself, Eric will be in France) and the overall question will remain the same: is that race clearable? ☺ ☺ ☺