

# 2017 MOJO Raid

What a day! The Xcite team competed in the 6 hour MOJO Adventure race on Saturday at Lake Somerset. There was also a 12 hour race – maybe next year for us. This race was a Rogaine event involving trekking, kayaking and mountain biking.

The day was a lesson for what can go wrong, will go wrong, but still persevere over adversity. On the way to the race, near Peachester, I had a look in the rear view mirror and could only see my bike on the bike rack. That was strange, I thought, as I know I packed both bikes. About the same time, Fiona mentioned “Why is my bike bouncing along the road at the back of the car?”. Good question, I thought. Unfortunately, her bike had fallen off the back and was trailing behind, with the front wheel still connected to the rack.

After stopping to check it out, and straightening the handlebars, I took it for a short ride. Seemed alright, but no brakes. Seems like the fall ripped the hydraulic fluid reservoirs clean off. Hmm, this will make things difficult. Our decision was “*Do we just go home, or continue on and see if we can borrow a bike, or just run to one mtb checkpoint with the bike and just kayak and trek?*”. We thought that would do, as we have been paddling really well of late, and thought if we can pick up all CPs on the kayak, at least that will make up for the lack of points on the ride. Yeah, right!

We finally arrived at HQ and worked out that the best option would be to just run with Fi’s bike. While setting things up, one of our fellow competitors (Team Swaussie) suggested “Why not just take your front brakes and put them onto Fi’s bike?”. Why not? Maybe because I am not a good bike mechanic, but then again what did we have to lose? So of course, I took up the challenge, and removed Fi’s damaged front brake and swapped them with mine. Well bugger me, it worked. We had one set of good brakes between us, but it was better than nothing.

As far as our game plan to spend a lot of time on the kayak, well that was scuppered. The wind report was 20 to 30km/h, gusting up to 70km/h, and was whipping up surfable waves. There goes that plan of ours. The kayak option ended up allowing competitors to run to the kayak CP and only paddle if they wanted to. But we wanted to paddle.

Mapping time was completed under a total fluster. We just couldn’t get things to work. Our plan was to spend about 3 hrs on the trek, 2hrs on the kayak, and 1hr on the bike. Due to our lack of braking power, we didn’t want to push the limits of these hills.

Start time seem to come around in 5 minutes instead of the given 90 minutes. At gun time, we took off on our designated route, which was into the hills to pick up 4 CPs (45 to 48), then see where we were at. Punching through some lantana and steep tracks (some needing a rope line access). As usually occurs in our run leg, we needed a toilet break. Amazingly, we stumbled upon a camp ground toilet block – at least something worked for us today. We headed back to HQ where there were another 250 points on offer. 100 of those points involved getting my gear off and jumping into the lake to swim about 50 m to get the

CP. Water was rather cold. We ending by picking up a couple more checkpoints, then onto the kayak.

As noted, the wind had turned the lake into a washing machine, with waves over 1 m high (or maybe a bit less, but not much). After enduring the incredulous comments from HQ staff about kayaking, we set off on the water. Well, the white caps were getting bigger, and the wind was whipping up a storm. We thought we would give a couple of CPs a crack, so set out. After smashing through the waves for about 20 minutes, with the rudder caught up in a left turn only Groundhog Day, we thought bugger this let's head back, after fixing up the rudder pedals. Again, my bush mechanic skills worked. We hammered back to CP1 (miserly 10 points) catching a couple of nice little wind waves. As we were going well, we headed off to pick up CP10 (nice 60 pts), and to cheer us up we saw a kangaroo having a drink at lake's edge. Apparently, we were one of only a few teams to pick up some points on the kayak. That made us feel better, even if we didn't get a lot of points and wasted a bit of time.



On to the ride. After cutting short the kayak leg, we had about 90 minutes left. We picked up the closest points to HQ, which was not easy with those hills and minimum brakes between us. We took a bit of time walking down some steepish hills, just to be on the safe side. After getting used to just rear brakes (me) and just front brakes (Fi), we managed to pick up a few more points that we thought we would. With about 30 minutes left, we headed back to HQ for a well earned drink and pizza.

We ended up with 730 points of a total of 1840 points, and finished mid-field. All said, we were happy to end up racing, rather than heading home after our inglorious start to the morning.

Thanks to Jo and Erren of MOJO, and all your great volunteers. That was a great event in a tough environment.