

SCAR's race really started on the Friday the day before the race. Due to work commitments both of us didn't start preparing our gear until late Friday afternoon.

Rob picked up his mountain bike at 5.00pm to find out that the pedals he had to get replaced were now an egg beater type which meant the cleats needed to be changed on his shoes. It soon came apparent that new shoes would need to be bought as the cleats could not be taken off his rusted old shoes. No time for a test run so Rob had to hope that there were to be no blisters or problems with the new set up.

Dave on the other hand only started packing around 8pm on Friday and loaded the back of his Hi-Lux up with all his gear. This included 2 pairs of shoes and his bike shoes. All packed, the pillow was hit around 10.30pm. The alarm sounded around 5am Saturday morning and once turned off, rain was heard on the roof of the unit. Oh s... his stuff is in the back of the ute. Lovely and wet which later proved not to be a problem.

We headed off from the Sunshine Coast at around 6.00am and after half an hour found ourselves driving along with Russell Stringer and Shaun Lauder from team RUSH. This seemed to be the start of a continual crossing of paths for the whole weekend.

After arriving at Race HQ we busily got together all our gear and maps, attended briefing, and got ready for the start.

Having looked at the map, we felt it was possible to clear the course subject to avoiding any nav errors or problems, so our goal was to collect all check points on the way and adjust as needed if a problem occurred or if we got behind where we hoped to be at a particular time.



The start was staggered every 10 seconds with team 1 & 2 leaving first and so on. Unknowingly to us at the time, this was where we also missed the briefing punch.

The race started at quite a frantic pace with a short ride and then straight up hill through the bush some 200m vertical over around 1 km. This was our first indication as to what we had in store for us over the next 24 hours. It was at the first check point that Rob realized that his shoes, cleats and pedals were fitted poorly and resulting in the first of many body slams as he tried to uncleat when trying to stop. The course then provided a fantastic downhill to the first Transition which gave Dave the thrill of riding a fast downhill with no rear brakes. With an enormous number of steep hills we realized early on that there were going to be some exiting downhill runs with front brakes only.

Realization had now set in that our preparation with our gear was somewhat slack and we were about to pay for it over the next 23 and ½ hours.

We managed to get out of the first transition relatively quickly, and after riding about 2 km towards our next check point realized that we had missed a 40 point checkpoint in the opposite direction. A quick apology to Dave and we speedily went back to collect that checkpoint. The next few hours went to plan and we collect all the bike check points, and then collected all the paddle checkpoints by 6.30pm. We were averaging 7 min a km on the paddle so we believed that so long as we got to the last paddle leg by 7am we could clear the course from then on.



Clearing the next bike leg we got to the start of the trek leg by 7 pm. We hoped to clear this in around 5 hours. It is amazing how a map with 25m contours can look not so bad on the map compared the real terrain. There was very little flat and hill after hill mixed with lantana. Dave got to see a snake at close hand coming down from checkpoint 28. A snake around 1 m long was curled up a tree that Dave went to lean on. We were about to clear the trek when we made a team decision to miss checkpoint 28 worth 40 points. It was nearly 1 am and the checkpoint entailed nearly 200m of vertical climbing with just 500m in distance. Based on earlier hills, it too was going to be very rocky. The time it would take, and our concern on how hard the bike leg was going to be added to our decision. To clear the trek course was 23 km; we did around 22km of it.

The next bike leg was fairly brutal. Between Rob not being able to clip in properly, and when he did, having trouble to unclip, Dave had no rear brakes. The combination meant that the ride was very entertaining with Rob being repeatedly body slammed into creeks, rocks and anything which required a quick foot down. Dave had white knuckles on every downhill, with one stack resulting in an 8cm long gash to his right forearm. This gash resulted in him missing presentations later to get fixed up. With contours being 25m, the tracks don't look so bad on the map, but reality was that after going hard for 18 hours you get a totally different perspective. One hill, Liam advised after the race, was 500m vertical over 2 km. We ended up dropping 2 checkpoints on the ride with the intention of being on the water by around 7 am to clear the rest of the course.

All was on target until we pulled up at checkpoint 48 at high speed, and rode over a guide post which was cut off 1 cm above the ground. This put a 4 cm gash in Rob's rear tire. After some despair we decided to put in a new tube and only inflate the tyre enough so

that the rim was just off the ground. This seemed to have worked and we rode off with a chunk of the tube sticking out of the tyre hoping we wouldn't run over a prickle.

We got the paddle half an hour later than hoped at 7.30 and decided to drop a couple of checkpoints so as to give us an hour and a half to get home on the bike for the last 13 km. We would pack our runners in case we had to run with our bikes. So we did 2 hours of paddling and collected all the higher check points and left 5. This way we felt we could still make the cut off of 11am if we were forced to run.

Luckily for us, we made it back with around 40min to spare, only just beating our mates from the Sunshine Coast, RUSH.

During the course we repeatedly ran into RUSH and helped push each other at times. We were just lucky enough to pick up the 2 extra checkpoints on the way.



A great big thanks to Liam and the rest of the team for putting the race together. There were many times on course where all we could think about was the poor bugger who had had to not only put the checkpoints out, but also retrieve them.