



## Back-to-Front at Bunyaville

By Brenton and Meredith Gray

It is not often my wife and I get some quality time together without our three young kids but this Rogaine was short enough at only three hours that we could actually sneak it in. Organising the babysitter was fairly straightforward until they realised when we said 7:15 on Sunday that we really did mean 7:15am and not pm. That sorted, we arrived on time and as prepared as we ever could be. Apart from not having forgotten anything critical like water or compasses we had even read the event reports for the previous years and made mental notes of the winner's tactics. This turned out to be fairly pointless (lesson learnt: don't bother planning).

Our original plan was to head East as far from the event centre as possible, try to do all of those controls, and then do whatever was possible on the West side as time allowed. A quick flip of the map with the upside-down point scores turned that on its head.

I am sure I heard the organiser say something about the West of the road being more "green" than the East so given the high values on the West and their proximity we planned to do the grottier and possibly more difficult Western part of the map whilst we were fresh (all parts of the map seemed pretty overgrown?). It would then be a clockwise route around the East side with the turning point depending upon progress.

This is our second Rogaine together the first being the Purtell shuffle. I also did the recent canoeing bigaine in addition with my 8-year-old son Captain Daniel. Meredith and I have both done some orienteering the last few years and there are some nice advantages of rogaining over orienteering:

- 1) You get to do it together
- 2) You can share your partner's water after your pack leaks!
- 3) The man can be chivalrous and clear all spider webs whilst continually reminding partner that the fallen logs, long grass with seeds and hidden holes in the ground are part of the fun.

So off we set with a direct route to the first control. After muddling through the green and being beaten to it by a few other teams it didn't take long for our first change of tack -- optimise length of running on tracks! The next few controls went as hoped and we seemed to be keeping a reasonable pace aided by the fact that we were in one of those early packs of teams who had initially set a similar course making control location quick. We then clearly had a different route from everyone else by going from control 93 to 80. (It took us longer than we had hoped and we should have done 71-80--HH as the finish). We now had the forest to ourselves with the upside that one no longer had to feel guilty when walking the hills. Off to control 100 and we had cleared 9 controls in the first hour.

At this point we had our first miscommunication -- a quick control count would give us an idea of progress; Meredith yelled out 27 and as with 9 done were a third through and on track to get all the controls. Unfortunately there were 29 controls and the "27" was actually our team number (Meredith was a bit nervous after the organiser's direction that you had to say your team number straightaway whenever challenged that every question in the first hour always had a "27" somewhere in the answer).

So with too much bravado we fell for the first sucker control and did 30 in the far South-West corner. The next hour was uneventful except the track runs seemed to be taking longer and longer (fatigue and length between controls). Trying to find control 90 on the spur was another wasted five minutes and the second hour resulted in 6 medium scoring controls only.

We didn't wish to risk missing the high valued controls back near the start so headed for home earlier than we had wished sacrificing control 52 (I am looking forward to seeing the winner's route as we

never managed to find an efficient way around 40-32-52-60-41-51). Tiredness was creeping in and we had 7 controls to do in the last hour which on our previous hour rate could be tight.

The teamwork was still happening but I was cramping and Meri was hungry. Let's not forget this was a date so time for a relaxing one minute meal together of dried fruits accompanied by what tasted like mouldy water from the hydration packs (does anyone else have this problem of mould in the bladders and tubes?).

Spirits boosted we decided the way home would be mainly track running with less navigation however we found a number of tracks slower than expected (eg near 61). Lack of concentration near 50 blew some more time (zero from two on the spur controls) and walking was limited now only to steep hills and in the green to ensure a prompt return. One more error near 101 had us in a minor panic attack given the high points value but by then there was a stampede of people on their way home so we could navigate by ear rather than sight. All turned out well and we were back with a few mins to spare.

An optimal route might have dropped control 30 and allowed us to loop further East but one never sees Harry Hindsight on the course so it is hard to trust him.

It was then a quick exit to relieve and thank the babysitter (ignoring their shock at our appearance) before a restful afternoon enjoying a cold beer and stretching out the cramps whilst trying to convince the kids that even though their father looks like a cripple at home he really did make it around most of the course (yeah sure dad).

Thanks to all those involved in the organisation of a very enjoyable event and in particular gratitude to the setter/controller for the visible control sites.

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Brenton and Meredith