

Pushing Up Daisy Rogaine – Organisers' Report

It was mentioned that there was no event report, so here we go...

We had a lot of fun organising the “Pushing Up Daisy” Upside Down Rogaine. We'd been thoroughly enjoying rogaining the last few years and thought we should do our part in helping out. Originally we had thought to organise a Rogaine in late 2015 or even 2016, so we wouldn't be rushed and could organise it all well in advance. Next thing we knew we were agreeing in October 14 to run the next event – in March 2015. Then I (Stephen) made a massive mistake and waited a few weeks until some temporary busy-ness disappeared before starting on applying for permits.

We had been keen to organise a rogaine in the Daisy Hill area, as we both live locally and train there regularly, and knew there was a massive area to be explored out there. We figured it would be a lot easier to organise close to home so we would waste less time getting there to explore, set, vet and clear the course.

The downside in choosing this area soon became evident. It turns out that where we wanted to be was where three local councils came together. Logan City Council, Brisbane City Council, Redland City Council and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service all had their own separate and lengthy approvals processes. At one stage I was pretty sure that the event was not going to go ahead. In the space of three days mid-January, two of the councils formally advised us that the event would not be approved, and we had no approval yet from the other council or QPWS. However, after a few meetings, a few letters, a friendly Local Councillor and dozens of emails, everyone came on board. In the end all of the councils were actually very enthusiastic, helpful and generally did whatever they could to assist us. Having said that, it was still not until the Wednesday before the event itself that we got 2 of the 4 approvals through.

One of the thrills of exploring and setting the course was discovering vast swathes of land, right on our doorsteps that we had never seen before. There was a massive tract of land the State Government had purchased as a reserve, with fences still all around it. There was one massive privately owned property that was just spectacular, whose owner was gracious enough to give us access. And there were hidden gems all over the place – probably our favourite being a canyon-like ravine. It was beautiful, quite difficult to get to but doable and navigable. 100 points here we come!

Unfortunately, when we received the last minute approvals, we were also told of several areas where we would not be allowed to access, at least not at night-time. Of course, that ravine was one of them, along with four others of our favourites! We were pretty disappointed to lose those CPs, but hey, the event got to go ahead!

This brought us down to 40 CPs exactly, and 1980 points. In the end the highest score was 1850 points, with only 3 CPs missed. Well done to Slosy and Jacob for winning 220 points clear of the field! I reckon the course was clearable with those CPs missing, but was still pleased no one quite did it. I'd read in the Diaper Creek Rogaine Organiser's Report that a great course was one that wasn't cleared by anyone, but where all CPs were visited. We were uncertain about this happening, but in the end every CP was visited. In fact, the least popular visit – CP 90, which really was a lot of effort to get to – still had 10 visits, so it looks a decent number of teams went to every part of the course. Good news!

Part of the difficulty in course setting was the massive number of private properties we had to avoid, and the approval restrictions in some areas to only have CPs on tracks. We knew this would not be ideal, but think we managed to work around the worst of the situation. The course was obviously going to be faster and easier in some ways than other rogaines, so we tried to ensure there were some tricky sections and the occasional trap for teams out there. We're not sure how far the top teams travelled, but the Strava record for team #9 showed 43k – so teams were certainly clocking up some serious distances!

We had been advised early on to avoid having obvious paths out of the Hash House to prevent teams bunching up at the start. We figured this would be one of the course weaknesses, as we really had no good options there. We loved the Hash House location and thought it was worth some early congestion. In the end, we were surprised to see the field set off in 4 different directions at the start. We had assumed everyone would go either NW to 53 or SE to 34. Although 15 teams did go straight to 53 and 17 teams to 42, to our surprise 12 also went NE towards CP21 and 7 SW to 33, both of which we feared most would skip or leave until the end.

Creating the map was all brand new for us too! Mark did all the work there, starting with the 1:40,000 map used from the 2007 Rogaine in the area made by Craig Steffens and Rob Rapkins. Geoff Peck from Toohey Forest Orienteering then provided huge amounts of coaching in how to use OCAD and make the map work, and from there Mark did a great job, even if it took far more time than expected. Getting the scale to 1:25,000 with the detail required there added a lot to the workload, but we think it was worth it. And then, with the slightly larger page-size, it turns out the scale was actually 1:23,750!

In the end, I think we learn a lot throughout this whole process. (1) Organising a Rogaine is a lot of fun. (2) If you're going to do it, start a lot earlier than we did. 5 Months still felt like we were racing constantly. (3) Areas close to suburbia are doable, but permits will be harder, especially at night time. (4) Start on the permits straight away! (5) Don't get annoyed at the imperfections in maps of other course setters – it turns out it's hard work!!!!

Thanks need to go to a lot of people. We appreciated all the positive feedback after the race, even though we know we made a number of mistakes. Countless Council officers would have given over 100 hundred hours of their time to this event. Alex Morgan, Richard Robinson and especially Paul Guard were incredibly helpful all the way through. Brenton Gray provided some great advice, Geoff Peck was incredible and Rob Simpson helped us with contacts. Glen Shailer and Redeemer Lutheran College graciously allowed us to access their land. Springwood Church of Christ put on a magnificent breakfast. Todd Bray and Shaun Jackson were amazing in clearing a third of the controls for us after they'd been out all night long, and Jason and Renae Appleby picked up a few for us also. Thanks so much – you are all massively appreciated!

We had a blast doing this all, but are pretty glad to be finished. Not quite as glad as our wives are though, who have been very patient the last few months!

Stephen Parker and Mark Morton