

Granite Belt Rogaine November 2020

What a great adventure Girraween Rogaine was last Saturday. I was encouraged by Liam's account to share our journey which included great camping, good company, and marvellous terrain.

Living in Warwick and having orienteered for 20 years, a Rogaine at Girraween was a 'must do' for my husband and me. And we managed to entice my sister and her husband to try their first 'adventure sport' as well as our daughter Alison and her Rogaine partner in crime Kelsey Harvey, who incidentally won W23 at the World Rogaine Championships near Alice Springs in 2016.

Having visited Girraween at least half a dozen times since Covid19 struck for 'exercise' 😊, we were sure there was going to be a 200 pointer on top of the Pyramids or at least a control which encouraged a dip in The Junction if it was hot, so we were a bit surprised to see that the entire course was south of Pyramids Road. We have done a few Rogaine's together, so we felt we'd planned a difficult but not too ambitious course going east to 36, then south to 67, 83, 46, and hoping to be at 91 by around the halfway mark. I was tempted to pick up 27 on the way to 67 but we stuck to our plan, when it was deemed too steep, which probably helped us more than anything to do as well as we did.

It was 3:15pm when we reached 91 so any extra controls (ok 'check points' for all the non-orienteers) we might add to our plan, were not looking promising, although our navigation thus far had been pretty much spot on and we felt we were keeping up a good pace. Philip even said later that I had kept up well going up the hills, encouraging words! The first Rogaine we did in 2005 we reckoned was like six hours of marriage counselling 😊 😊.

At 91, we climbed east. (Take note Liam & Leo and Alison & Kelsey!!) It was steep, but the climb up, the top of the ridge and the spur down towards 68 was all bare rock! We sited The Sphinx and Turtle Rock on the way down and even heard someone at the control, sorry CP, let out a yell when they found it, so we were pretty sure we didn't have to worry too much about the vague watercourse junction at the bottom as an attack point. Alison and Kelsey never even found 68, coming around the bottom, but pushed onto 45 when they, like Liam and Leo, realized they had also been chatting too much and not concentrating, hard!

By CP 66 it was 4:55pm and we hesitated for about half a minute before we knew we could make 59 and 26 before the dreaded point losing time started. Around this time, we started navigating with the Schulz family whom we know from orienteering. Now, because I coach them, I happen to know these 2 kids are around 11 and 8 and they were 5 hours into a 6 hour rugged, dirty, bush bashing walk/Rogaine, but I heard no complaints. And they didn't seem to be having trouble keeping up either. Their mother Michelle and I had a bit of a winge, 'sore feet' etc. but not the kids.

We made it back to the HH with 8 minutes to spare and were happy with our whole course. After a small technical glitch, which Peter rectified for us, we finished with the same points as Alison and Kelsey, although they are claiming the win as they reached the HH just a few minutes before us. Equal points with former World Champions less than half our age? I'll take that as encouragement!

Thanks to Peter and Nigel for all their hard work, and to their band of volunteers. And thanks to my sister for the loan of a hiking pole which was a great asset. I'm keen for another Rogaine at Girraween, although maybe not at night?!

Marion Burrill