



Xcite AR Wildfire Race Report

This year two Xcite teams tackled the 2021 Wildfire Raid held at Lake Wivenhoe a couple of weeks ago. Fiona and I in Team Xcite were joined by Tony Maher and Adam Woods in Team Xcite 2. In preparation for future 24 hour races as a team, we decided to go round the course together to see how well we gelled.

In accordance with Covid-19 best practice we maintained a social distancing of at least 1.5 m from each other, although this was more due in part to Tony's pre-race dinner consisting of an extremely copious amount of beans.

Our race plan consisted of knocking over most of the trek leg, allowing for us to get back and grab the kayaks before they were all taken. We picked up 5 of the 6 trek checkpoints, and needless to say there were many, many kayaks still at transition. We could have gone for that 6th CP. Anyway, it was a good 1 hr for the trek leg, which was as planned. We covered this leg quite well, although the start up the hill got the motor running and some heavy breathing.

Onto the kayak, and we had the option of grabbing a boat from transition and lugging it down the hill or pick one up at the lake edge (left there by the 3 hr racers earlier) and save the trouble of lifting a 25kg boat some 100m. Obviously, we took the first option! We did not see the 20 boats down by the lake edge until we were over the crest of the hill and far away. We figured we couldn't just drop them halfway and skedaddle down to the lake, as that may have been frowned upon.

The paddle was held in beautiful flat waters, although we were concerned the CPs may be a bit tricky because the water level in the dam is 40%, not the 80% as marked on the map. Luckily for us, we had been through a similar experience a few years ago at this venue. Still, it took a bit of time to find our legs on the water, and once we figured out that the CPs would be close to the water's edge and not up on some hidden dry gully, we were able to sprint through the kayak leg. Or maybe amble through the kayak leg. Anyway, 12km in about 2 hours picking up all CPs had us nicely on track.

Now onto the ride leg. We had just under 3 hours to grab as many CPs as we could. Our target was to head out to a couple of peninsulas picking up CPs on an out and back method, then do a loop around the southern track and road, leaving out the big hill (good view from there, but not feeling the love for it during the race). All was progressing nicely until I heard

a very ugly grunt coming from my gearing. The front derailleur decided to call it quits, so I only had the small chain ring in action – good for going up hills, not so for riding had elsewhere. Fi's bike was also giving her the "you know what's" with gearing issues. Looks like we will be off for new bikes before Rogue24.

As time was starting to get away and thinking we may not be able to do the full loop and get back in time, we decided to cut the loop short by going about a quarter of the way round, pick up a couple of CPs, have a toilet break, something to eat, a bit of a lay down, and then head back (maybe not the lay down). We scrambled back to the finish line picking up our last 2 CPs but coming in with 30 minutes to spare. In hindsight (and don't we all love hindsight), we should have continued on around the loop, which would have given us enough points to land us about 20 spots further up the list.

All in all, we had a good hit out and the team gelled as a group. Now looking forward to the Rogue 24 hour race at Lake Wyaralong in a week.

