



Mazda Haenertsburg Mountain Bike Marathon

Saturday 8 September 2007

by Robert McGloughlin

The eighth stage of the 2007 Mazda Mountain Bike Series was held at Haenertsburg under the picturesque Iron Crown peak this weekend. The McCain Adventure Addicts team of Graham Bird (Tweet), Jeannette Walder (Bubbles), James Lea Cox, Tatum Prins, Cobus & Cindy van Zyl and Rob McGloughlin went up to participate in the race and to spend the weekend getting in some training before the team leaves for the Ecomotion adventure race in Brazil.

The race was billed as a tough 81km course that included a 20km uphill climb through the Wolkberg to the summit at the Iron Crown. The race was brutal!

After a quick warm-up around the Stanford Lake College, the race set off through clouds of powdery dust thrown up by the leaders and the pacing quad bike. The

leaders made a spectacular start to the race, table-topping over a ramp just outside the school. The initial pace was fast and only settled down at around the 15km mark where there was a short climb. Unfortunately on the decent Yolande de Villiers, the pre-race ladies' favorite, fell and suffered a bad concussion. Tweet and James had stopped to help see what they could do. With





At the base of the climb the wind died down (or was that just me slowing down into granny gear) and the heat pressed down so that it felt like you were stuck under a Sumo wrestler in a sauna.

It is at this stage - the stage when your muscles have gone beyond the screaming of the early fast pace to the state when the lactic acid starts to build and your system retaliates by releasing endorphins that tickle each of your pores as they push and shove their way out of your system, looking for a party else where – this is the stage that keeps me coming back for more.



Unfortunately this time there was a premature ejaculation of those little fury buggers and it left me feeling

like the last person standing at musical chairs with no music and definitely nowhere to sit to rest my weary body.

The King of the Mountain point was about 9km up the climb after which there was a short decent. The second half of the climb was a little easier but had a last sting in the tail, a thick grassy section that the nefarious organizer, Garry Townsend, threw in to make you feel like you had dropped into quicksand. He did make up for it though with an adrenalin inducing white knuckle decent. The first section was a fun tight winding rocky section that was fast. Then came the 'mine shaft' a rocky step section with ledges and steps to negotiate. It must have claimed a few scalps, Bubbles collected a nice shining haematoma for her efforts.

The course then headed back to Ebenezer Dam for the last 20km. On

help on its way they set off down the hill, with James getting a slight advantage over Tweet.

That was the last I was to see of them. James slowly increased his lead over the rest of us and steadily increased the intensity over the 20km climb to the summit.

Back at the bottom of the decent, the course followed the district road for about 8km to a sharp left into a private reserve and some single track. Coming back out onto the district road, things literally started to heat up. For the next 10km the road ran along the base of the looming mountains of the Bewaarkloof Nature Reserve and you got a good long look at what was coming: the big climb!



paper this looked like it was going to be the easy part but I found it never ending. Cramps had set in and I was, like the TV program, Going Nowhere Slowly.

Tatum on the other hand just gotten stronger and showed her great endurance ability, soaking up the competition and flying home to collect 2nd ladies prize in her category and overall. Well done Tatum.

James had a fantastic race, ending up 21st overall with Tweet in 24th not too far behind. Cobus was a different story, having spent a lot of the ride with Bubbles he eventually decided to dismount suddenly and remain in the ditch he landed in. Only moving to rearrange his helmet to keep the sun out of his eyes! Fortunately, George Oertel, who had had a race full of mechanical problems, was there to wake him up and fill his water bottle so he could make it home. Cindy had a much more successful 15km race cruising home in 2nd spot.

Thanks to Rawlinson's for the use of their place on Ebenezer Dam and to Garry Townsend and his team from Townsend's Adventure Lifestyles for a stunning race.

Lastly McCain Adventure Addicts would like to thank the following team sponsors who support and promote our passion for alternative sport and the great outdoors:

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