

Mountain Designs Adventure Racing Team

Thursday, 13 August 2015

Team Mountain Designs XPD Townsville Ramblings

With Kim and Leo injured and not able to join Schlossy and myself for this event, we recruited Damon Georke and Kathryn Preston from the now defunct and highly successful Blackheart team.

Day	Description	Time	Location
1	Start		
2	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
3	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
4	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
5	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
6	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
7	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
8	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
9	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
10	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
11	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
12	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
13	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
14	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
15	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275
16	05:00 - 04:00 PM	05:00 - 04:00 PM	1275

#XPDAR Logistics Plan

With so much experience in the team, we had a very relaxed and organized planning stage.

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About Me



Mountain Designs - Adventure Racing Team

Over the past 10 years and more, Team Mountain Designs have been one of the most



Bikes packed and ready to go.

We started with an 8km paddle to Magnetic Island where we traversed the coast for 30km completing snorkeling tasks along the way. The coastering and rock scrambling were technical and the bush was thick. We thoroughly enjoyed picking our way through the maze of granite boulders that are strewn across the whole island.



consistently performing teams in Australian Adventure Racing...with the win at XPD Flinders Ranges 2013 being our highlight! Team Mountain Designs will continue to draw on past racing experience to set new goals and be one of the highest performing teams in the sport of Adventure Racing. Our Vision is to perform at speeds normally reserved for on road terrain while maintaining world class navigation skills.....and we will do this with a smile on our face! Our community vision is to give back what ever possible to a sport that has given us the opportunity to achieve goals beyond our dreams. It is this vision along with support from our partners and sponsors that will allow us to pass on valuable knowledge to aspiring Adventure Racers. Check out our website:- <http://www.triadventure.com.au/teammountaindesigns.html>

[View my complete profile](#)



CP 3 Snorkel

We eased into West Point just after 8pm and in 2nd place behind world number 6 Team Raidlight from France, Peak Adventure were next followed by Bivouac Colts. Team Merrell ranked 8th in the world came in 4 hours after us. This could all have been strategic as we now could not start until 6am in the morning. We spent the night sleeping under a spectacular starry cloudless sky on a comfortable bed of sand. We woke up feeling fresh and eager to see what the course had in store for us, the wind was coming up as we headed off onto the ocean under a dimly lit sky. A clear and crisp sunrise chased us across to the mainland for CP14 we punched in 2nd behind Peak Adventure and headed north. With the freshening wind now behind us we chased runners all the way to CP15 and the finish leading Peak Adventure into the TA.

We began the trek up to Paluma with Peak. With smoke from a fire billowing out of one of the valleys that was one of the route options for this leg, race officials instructed us to only use the other route.

Now travelling with Peak and with a little trepidation under the threat of fires in the area we couldn't locate the track up the hill so navigated up the spur where it was meant to be. After scrambling through the undergrowth for half the climb the trail appeared and we soon powered to the top and started the maze of trails uniquely marked by sundials. This was a lush rainforest area with sweet mountain water to quench our thirst and a full tree canopy blocking out another starry sky. Kathryn was nauseous and was soon vomiting, to our surprise this did not slow her down, she switched her energy source to Coke and kept tramping toward the next CP.

We rolled into the MTB TA 10 minutes behind Peak ready to finally ride our bikes after 2 days and a night. Kathryn's husband and son were at this TA and were also both sick so we now had to manage a contagious illness. Temps were in the single digits so we rugged up and headed off with our Ay-Up lights blazing the way into the misty night. All was going well until we got a little turned around trying to locate CP20 on a single track as the trails weren't marked on the map as they appeared on the ground. We relocated back to the lake and then located the CP after 3hrs. Temperatures were rising as we landed at the Next TA for the Canyon Trek. Here we discovered Peak had forgotten their helmets and would incur a penalty giving us the upper hand for the time being.



Hidden Valley - Running River Trek

We found CP 21 in the gorge without trouble and made the decision to go up and out of the gorge on a straight bearing rather than down the gorge and out a creek line. CP22 proved troubling as the contours in this area were not correctly marked. We lost another 3 hours and daylight locating this CP . We now were navigating more conservatively and nailed CP 23 and headed to Kim's swimming challenge CP in a beautiful lagoon section of the canyon. We didn't get to experience the beauty of this location as it was dark and we were consumed by dread of a cold water swim on a cool night.



The Running River Gorge in daylight!

We got through quickly and kept moving toward CP25 in a creek junction. This area also caused us problems so with dawn 2.5 hours away we slept. The CP was only 100 metres away. Nicely refreshed from sleep we hurried to the MTB TA to discover we had been passed by Bivouac, Raidlight and Merrell. We paced-lined on the bike passing all three teams to begin the Burdekin river paddle in 2nd and with 8 hours of daylight.



Team MD's prepare for the paddle

We were told this paddle would involve a lot of dragging the boats as the water levels were very low. This paddle was a real highlight for me, I enjoyed the ducking and weaving around low hanging trees and the abundance of animal and bird life kept the interest to see what was around the next corner. The last 4 hours was very shallow and cold so the finish of this leg was a relief. We huddled around the fire at this TA trying to warm the body for the final push to Mid Camp and some much needed hot food and sleep.



Gary at Mid Camp

We headed out onto the 145km MTB at 8.20am feeling optimistic about our chances of catching a fast moving Peak Adventure, we had done our home work on this leg and felt we had the best route planned. We met 4 Qld out-back characters at the hut CP. They gave us 4 icy cold cans of Coke to drink while we shared a yarn or two. We headed out carrying our bikes across the river and then rode through the bush to hit the trail near a bush runway and then up to the road to Ravenswood. Here we had a bike rogaine to historical sites around town. This was a nice break and a chance to take in the town. We grabbed an ice cream and took off towards the Maze TA. With the map called the Maze and darkness approaching we headed off with caution.



River Crossing



The pub is tempting!



Damon is on the Map

[Geocentric Outdoors Facebook Page Interview with Kathryn Preston](https://www.facebook.com/geocentricoutdoors)

We got the first CP and headed into the Maze carefully but had no luck, over shooting the location by 2km . Things were starting to get a bit funky with a nudie run, some attempted dacking and some tow rope whipping all in an attempt to stay awake. Out came the No-Doze and bang we were back flying, locating a creek line which led us directly to the Maze CP and then powering toward the canyon and hopefully some water. Our No-Doze induced clarity soon faded and the long arm of the Maze reached out and dragged us back into the abyss. Drifting east everything looked wrong, so back to sleep for 45 minutes and dawn.



Kathryn starts with the map on this trek!

Back on track now we had no further issues getting the Canyon CP and some nice water. Barreling up the canyon from boulder to boulder we only had one short stop to patch up a deep little cut. Up the spur to the next CP we came across a box of heaven, the evil Bycroft had relented and left us all some Coke and Pringles. We only had 13 hours of food for this leg and we had now been out for 20 hours so this little bonanza was well received. This leg was now a classic Bycroft soul destroyer, a leg of XPD which should be expected and eagerly anticipated. We rounded the dam indicating our spur line and after 5 days of following the same 4 x sets of foot prints we finally had virgin trail, we couldn't believe it, not a foot print anywhere. We had a little bet, with 3, for Peak had already finished and 1 for we were now leading. We were 1st to sign into TA and our smiles and relief couldn't have been bigger. We rested a little here as the heat and lack of food was taking its toll.

[Geocentric Outdoors - Facebook Page Video - Team Mountain Designs Interview as they approach the final Transition Area](#)



The turning point!



Team MD's treks into the final TA



Kathryn enjoys a well deserved drink



Dave still can't believe they are leading



Gary - smiles with relief

We rolled out relaxed with an at times a seemingly unlikely victory in the bag. The finish line greeted us and we were soon on the lounges eating pizza, drinking champagne and regaling our journey to any who would listen.



The final ride to the finish

Big thanks to all our long suffering families that keep all our affairs in order and support us while we chase little orange and white flags through some of the most remote locations the puppet master, Bycroft, can find.

Geocentric Outdoors Facebook Video - Team Mountain Designs crosses the finish line to win XPD Tropics 2015



Team Mountain Designs #XPDAR



Enjoying the Champagne.

[Here is a link to the Geocentric Outdoors #XPDAR Report XPD Tropics - Day 6 Winners Finish](#)

[Here is a link to the write up in the Townsville Bulletin 12 August 2015 Team Mountain Designs Defends Title in XPD Adventure Race](#)

Team Mountain Designs would like to finally thank our team sponsors as without your underlying support, opportunities like these do not eventuate.

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Posted by Mountain Designs - Adventure Racing Team at 19:17



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