



FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2015

Tri Adventure XPD Race Report

Alex Austin, Gina Dunsdon, Cass Kimlin and Dyson Findlay



The alarm sounded on Wed morning and through nervous and sleepy eyes the team made a mad scramble to don the race kit, demolish the resort buffet for some last minute calories/hot food and finish

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our final preparations to board the bus and head to the start line. The previous two days had been a cluster fight trying decipher the logistics of the race and pack our bikes and gear into the allocated boxes so that we would see the right stuff at the Transition Areas (TA's) - not something you want to stuff up. We had also spent the previous day closely examining the race maps and figuring out our plan of attack so at this point we were all just stoked get the race underway.

[Race start - 8km Kayak from main beach Townsville to Magnetic Island. 30km Trek + 2km SUP](#)

Teams assembled on the strand waiting for the kayaks to arrive so they could prepare their boats for the start. The usual melee of athletes running around like headless chooks trying to find bathrooms, fill up water bladders, grabbing extra bungees to lash packs down ensued but we managed to find two boats with working rudders and get our prep underway. Cue cliché start line photo, a quick message from the race director not to pat the salt water crocs and the gun sounded to start the mayhem. I must admit it was quite funny watching everyone run and sprint off in the boats knowing that we had a darkzone after the trek and all anyone was really playing for was sleep time. The paddle was fairly straightforward and by the time we landed at Magnetic Island we were positioned inside the top 10.



A quick transition on the SE corner of the island into our trekking gear and we set off to find CP2 at the end of a rocky headland. Having done our homework on Google maps we saw a nice little route around the perimeter of the headland following the rocks to find the CP2- how wrong we were! The rocks were massive and we found ourselves clambering over these boulders, sliding through gaps and moving at a snail's pace. A quick change of plans to head up and over the high point wasn't much better but we eventually found what we were looking for and headed back to the beach. The travelling was again slow and with the ocean just there we eventually bit the bullet, jumped in packs and all and swam our way

▶ 2011 (11)

▶ 2010 (8)



BASIC INFO



**TRIADVENTURE
NOOSA**

Kim Beckinsale and Jan Leverton have been involved in Adventure Racing and Multisport since 2003 following numerous years of participation in other endurance-style events. The freedom & excitement of adventure sport has ignited a passion for, not only experiencing it themselves, but exposing others to the pristine places and experiences that only adventure sports can take you...not to mention the lifestyle benefits of being active in the great outdoors. We'll see you out there!

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)

back to the sand - so much for keeping the feet dry!

A quick walk up the beach to CP3 saw us run into one of the Tri Adventure oracles: Kim Beckinsale! Kim was donating her time as a race official as she was unable to compete due to injury. It was so good to see her so early on in the race and we were looking for a bit of an insight into what the snorkel leg may entail. But true to her character, she was the ultimate diplomat and gave us nothing!!! We managed to get the snorkel leg out of the way without much fuss simply following the trail of submerged water bottles and memorised the attached letters.



Cass and Gina - all smiles but tough as nails

Tramping Nth a couple of km's to CP4 saw us greeted by the second Tri Adventure oracle Jan Leverton! Jan was also volunteering her time helping out the race photographer and managed to grab a few happy snaps of us heading into the next snorkel. Much the same as the previous leg, albeit a little colder, we finished without fuss, picked up CP5 on the other side of the headland before making our way up Nth past the old battle forts to grab CP6, CP7. We converged on CP8 with a number of other teams including Bivouac and Tiger. After arriving a little earlier than us the cheeky lads from Tiger informed us that they hadn't had any luck and were off to explore a cave 30m South... except they departed in a different direction...hmmm. Nonetheless we persisted in the same spot with our search, found the CP and headed off towards CP9 and the start of the SUP.





Strong selfie game on top of the fort - Magnetic Island

We ran into Jan again at the start of the SUP which we learned would be two people to a board and one paddle with all your gear - interesting. 2kms later and a sore set of arms we hit the beach, dried off and headed up and over creek line towards CP10. Rock hopping down the West face of the creek line we were greeted with a magic sunset, so naturally we stopped, had the feel good warm and fuzzy group hug and continued on our merry way!

The warm and fuzzies quickly turned to dark and stormies as we donned the lights and spent the next 4-5hrs rock hopping over the Northern coastline as we made our way to CP11. Thinking the going might be a little easier up higher we scaled one of the cliffs only to be met with similar terrain, thorny bushes and bighting tree ants! Back down to the coast it was to endure the rocks to CP11 before picking up CP 12 without much fuss and arriving at CP13/TA around 130am for a quick hit out of Back Country Dehy dinner, a quick chat with volunteer Michele Krome (avid Tri Adventure enthusiast) and a sleep to wait out the darkzone till 6am. Day 2 - Leg 3 60km Kayak After a colder than expected sleep on the beach (it was freezing, isn't it supposed to be the tropics???!!!!) we loaded up the boats and headed East to CP14. Spirits were high as we had survived the first day, managed to score a few hours of sleep and were injury free. We plodded along against a stiff cross wind to Saunders beach before heading Nth and chasing the bumps of the SE wind. Dysons key motivational attributes came to the floor in this leg as the somewhat arduous nature of 60km of paddling hit home. We were also reluctant to head to shore for breaks as an encounter with a croc was a distinct possibility. An ever enthusiastic Michele greeted us at CP15 with the good news that we only had 20km to go!



As the sun started to head towards the horizon we rounded the final point and paddled into CP16/TA on the beach where we were greeted by Jan once again and a nice 50m soft sand Kayak portage just to rub salt into the wound. After drying off and comparing blisters we chowed down some grub by the fire in a beach shack to the delight of the locals who were highly amused by these spandex wearing athletes as they polished off tins of JD and coke like they were going out of fashion.

Leg 4 50km Trek/Rogaine

Collecting our Rogaine map on the way out of the TA we headed West leaving the coastline behind us and headed for the rain forest and some hills! And what a hill it was to start! Once we finally found the Foxlees track under the cover of darkness with a number of other teams we spent the next 2 hrs ascending 900m of elevation to land us on top of the Paluma range. We'd just about used all on our fun tickets on this climb and as so it was decided we'd find the closest Rogaine CP and bunker down for a few hours rest at about 4am. Our wise oracle Kim had told us if we could make it through day 2, everything would work out fine and the pain would become bearable! So, we found a small patch of flat, non-tree rooted ground to lay down, draped the sleeping bag over the top and shut down the engines for 2hrs before it was time to make the most of the daylight and get on the move. Rounding out the final CPs we headed for the next TA17 some 15km through more undulating terrain.



A quick stop on Paluma Range



Dyson slams a 'man can' on the Trek

Leg 5 56km Bike

Grabbing the bikes out of the boxes we immediately set to work assembling the bits and pieces (we would get very good at this by the end of the race!) and departed with a few hours of light left to pick up the CPs. On the way to CP20 something went amiss and the tracks that I thought we were on weren't lining up with the compass. With some generous advice regarding our location from the Tiger Every day fitness team and the Dutch team, I figured out that the angle of my map board was skewing the compass and well Nth, wasn't quite really Nth... Problem solved and off we went once again rolling our way to CP21/TA.



Another successful CP find, this time at Birthday Falls

Leg 6 45km Hike + Canyoning

We were really feeling the chill coming into this TA and were delighted to see a fire pit as we packed our bikes away and hit some dehy goodness while attempting to warm up. We marched off down the road toward CP23, were bang on with our attack line own the adjacent creek line and stumbled upon the flag at the start of the gorge. Deciding to solder on down the gorge toward CP23 we were quickly "cliffed out" and decided to turn around, head back up the gorge to the other side and take a bearing for the road. We saw a few lights around us from other teams so figured this was a fairly safe option. Micky's hands were rounding 4am so we headed for the creek near the high point across from the CP for a kip. Turns out we weren't the only ones with this idea and we ran into Team Neverest breaking camp so we slid ride in to their nice spot till sun up.

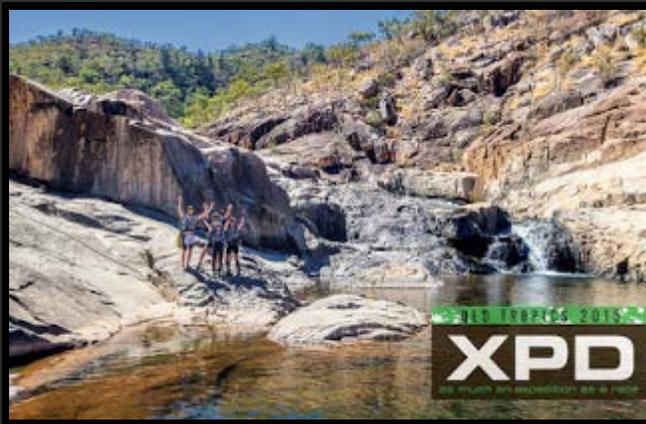


A team dive into the lower section of the canyon

Up at sparrow farts once again and straight up the spur line, across the creek and up 700m of elevation to the CP. We were fairly convinced we were in the right spot however it took a few nervous moments to find the flag... we certainly wouldn't have been too stoked at climbing the wrong hill!!!

Onwards to CP24 incident free and some more rock hopping into the canyoning section at CP25. Kim had been camped out for a few nights to help with this section and we were delighted to see a familiar face one again along with Jan who turned up to catch a few happy snaps. The water was freezing! Aren't we in the tropics??? It took us 30mins after we crossed the canyons lying on the rocks just to warm up. I can't imagine what the teams went through that had to do this at night!!!





Looks rad but the water was freezing

CP26 was easy as pie and we strolled into CP27/TA ready to build our bikes once again and roll the 50km to the next Kayak leg. We were greeted here by Michele and Greg once again and their enthusiasm was as uplifting as ever.

Leg 7 & 8 50km Bike and 70km Kayak

This bike leg was fairly uneventful aside from Dyson's front gear leaver detaching itself from the bike... but it was great rolling into the next TA hearing the Wallabies vs. All Blacks game was

underway... even though it was 3-0 to the AB's. Dyson our lone Kiwi got plenty of mileage from this on the paddle but it turned out the last laugh would be ours. As we departed TA the official waved us off with an "Enjoy the next 15km..." This could only mean one thing and sure enough in 500m our worst fears were confirmed as made the first of possibly 300 portages as the water level in the river was virtually non-existent. We like to refer to this leg as the portage leg, it seemed like every time you'd get going a take a few strokes, bang, the boat would bottom out. So, out we'd get out, drag it along the bank and try to hug the edges of the river where you could at least get half a stroke in.

Starting this leg at around 8pm, we figured it would be a great opportunity to gain some time and decided to paddle through the night. It was a decision that was also forced upon us by the temperature! Bordering on hypothermia and wearing every piece of clothing we owned we paddled as hard as we could to keep our body temp up as stopping would certainly lead to disaster! Speaking of which we came across a few teams camped up on the side of bank, huddled by a fire trying to stay warm.

This was also the point in the race where we had also gone the longest period of time without sleep and the 'sleep monsters' started to take hold. At about 3am we all entered a state of delirium and the hallucinations took hold. Trees and branches started to transform themselves into faces and objects beyond explanation. A necessary portage took place and the whole gang got out for some aerobics on the bank to try and wake ourselves up. A few bottles of coke and some food later we seemed to be through the worst of it and the sunrise snapped us back to reality.

As we approached the TA we noticed a distinct distance between the flag and where the boat trailer was located... never a good sign. So, using our throw ropes we dragged the boats 500m up a hill across soft sand to the trailer where we collapsed in a heap at our bikes. A necessary 40min kip was required before we made the 50km ride into mid camp for some hot food and a proper rest. If you've seen the video of us as we enter mid camp you'll see our state of exhaustion.



[Leg 10 Mid camp and 145km Bike](#)

Departing mid camp at approx. 12am feeling refreshed after washing the stink off and a few hours sleep we were abruptly pulled over by local authorities who were very inquisitive as to what we were up to! A brief explanation sorted them out but unfortunately our request for an escort was declined. Begrudgingly we made our way easily enough to CP32 and CP33. It was here we joined up with team Raidlight for a river crossing. We'd come to expect these type of 'spanner in the works' moments from the race director so didn't think much of it... until after getting to the other side and being confronted by a 50m wide stagnant creek! Oh man, things hit an all-time low at this point as we bashed our bikes through almost impassable thorny bushes trying to find a way around. The thought of swimming with our bikes even crossed our minds! Luckily enough we worked our way down the creek and found a point which we could cross and were soon over the other side and making our way back towards the road. From here it was simply 80kms of bitumen broken up by the very occasional stink of roadkill and a Rogaine

around the town of Ravenswood which is an old mining town trapped in the 1800s! We had hoped to stop for a quick cleansing ale at one of the pubs in town but with the next trek requiring as much daylight as possible the tough decision was made to keep on rolling.

Leg 11 4500000000km Trek

We arrived at the TA to the trek asking which team had won and were shocked to hear that both Peak Adventure and the MD's were still trekking. This also sent shivers down our spine as the realisation set in that we too would be spending 30 hrs plus tramping through the bush. We raced to pack our bikes away and get out on the course with as much light as possible to at least nail the first two CPs. The adrenaline definitely kicked in as we set a cracking pace to CP36 catching up to Raidlight once again with Neverest not too far away. As we entered the notorious section known as 'The Maze' we were met with a labyrinth of trails and contours that didn't quite match what was on the map. We found ourselves at a high point overlooking what we thought was CP37 with a setting sun and simply destroyed from the pace we had to keep to get us there. We had also run out of water and were faced with the tough decision to make a run at the CP into the dark (or what we thought was the CP, turns out it was... a supposed 10m knoll that had at least 30m of elevation... go figure) or back track to a known dam for water, grab some sleep and wait for first light. We took the second option out of necessity and were suitably devastated at having to give away so much time but it turns out that we were only passed by one of the male teams. The next problem we faced was that each dam we checked was full of rank non potable water. We came across a well with clean water, but with no "Macgyver" in sight to rig up a suitable retrieval device we were forced to go without. So, still without water, we crammed into our tent and got some much needed sleep ready to smash the rest of the course the next day.

And that we did. Turns out the extra sleep held us in great stead to ramp up the pace and with daylight on our side we breezed through CP37, found a cattle trough with clean water less than 2km away, marched our way up the gorge to CP38, through the undulating bushland to CP38 where the race director had kindly dropped a box of coke and pringels!!!! Yew! Onwards and very much upwards through the torching heat into to the last CP39 which we found with ease as the sun crested the horizon to the West before making the steep descent down towards the final TA and a run at the finish. This however was not without incident as we were so paranoid about the out of bounds area surrounding the house next to the TA that we overshot what we thought was the road that led to the TA. After 20 wasted minutes we realised that the gate to the property was actually the road a proceed to find Michele a further 200m along at the TA jumping with excitement as we prepared for the final leg.

Leg 12 40km bike

Building our bikes for the final time, Gina cracked the whip to get us out of TA and on the road to the finish. After what seemed like an eternity we rounded the final bends of the Ross River under the cover of darkness and cruised our way back to the finish line at the Mercure. Emotions were running wild as we rode side by side under the finishing banner to the applause of the race director, Tri Adventure oracles Jan and Kim and our number one support team Steve and Shan who had flown especially up from Noosa to watch us cross the finish line. It was hard to believe it had all come to an end. The mental fortitude required just to keep pushing finally gave way as we sat on the finishing couch, champagne and beers in hand toasting to what was for all of us the ultimate team adventure of a lifetime.

What an amazing experience. Completing a race of this magnitude is mind boggling. Made all the more special by the fact that we were able to share it as 4 likeminded fools! I truly believe it is the strength of our bond that made our race so special and enjoyable. A huge thanks to Jan and Kim for planting the seed so many months ago and grooming their plan to fruition. Their easy going and enjoyment focused approach to all things adventure racing truly shone through in our race style and for that we are eternally grateful. To Michele and Greg, thanks you're your enthusiasm and encouragement out on course. We looked forward to every TA knowing that one of you would be there for a hug and making us feel like champions. To Shan and Steve, thanks for your support, it really shows the strength of Tri Adventure family! My teammates Cass and Gina, no doubt you two are the toughest chicks on the planet. The sacrifices you have made to make this possible are amazing. Whenever Dyson and I were feeling like it was getting a bit much all we had to do was look over at you two and see a smiling face to make it ok. To Dyson, cheers for the laughs cuz, you really know how to lift the mood and keep that hair impeccably groomed. Lastly, thanks to our families/loved ones and in particular Richard, Zaelia, Darren and Bex for steering the ship back home and putting up with our schedules!

Until next time. Go Tri Adventure!

7th Place mixed teams, 9th overall 158 hours and 38 minutes



POSTED BY TRIADVENTURE NOOSA AT 9:32 AM

MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2015

Team Tri Adventure - XPD Old Tropics 2015



Tri Adventure, for those who may not know, is a very small and quite

different personalised coaching business based at Noosa on the Sunshine Coast, in Queensland. Co-founders and Coaches Jan and Kim after realising the health and lifestyle benefits gained through the training and preparation for Adventure Racing, decided they wanted to share their knowledge and experience with others, so they too could experience a life full of fun and adventure whilst exploring some of the beautiful Noosa Hinterland.

So, after many years of competing in and preparing others for some of Australia's iconic Adventure Races, such as Geoquest, Hells Bells, the Keen Adventure Race, the Mark Webber Challenge and XPD Tasmania, we thought wouldn't it be great for us to uniquely put together some of our 'Tri Adventure' athletes to take on the next version 'Australia's Toughest Adventure Race – XPD' in Townsville. As Kim had raced in and completed two such events with Team Mountain Designs, and Jan seeing the events from the other side taking on volunteer roles for both, we wanted once again to be able to pass on what we have learned to others and help a group on a journey to and through a race such as XPD.

A plan was hatched. So a few weeks before XPD entries opened.....we started having some conversations and planting some seeds in the minds of Gina, Cassie, Alex and Dyson.....and soon XPD as Team Tri Adventure became a reality. In the lead up to XPD we have had the opportunity to watch the team grow and develop as a team and develop all the necessary skills that they will take into an expedition race such as XPD. Along the way our Tri Adventure Training Group members and friends have been there too, taking part in some or all of the races and adventures that we conceived to help prepare the team for XPD. The Team have had two hit outs together racing as a team in the Rogue 24 and in the Geoquest Half where they finished in a podium position. It's just really all about having fun and seeing the beauty in the outdoors and having the fitness enjoy it.

So Gina, Cassie, Alex and Dyson we know you will have plenty of followers and support out there whether they be out on the course (Kim, Jan , Michele & Greg Krome – Volunteers; Mike & Mandy, James Pitman - Media) or back home watching the dots on the live tracking. On behalf of Tri Adventure and all of our training group we want to wish you well and hope that together you have the experience of a lifetime.

Team Tri Adventure – Team 32 XPD Qld Tropics 2015

Gina Dunston – 'Gini' Probably the fittest mum you will ever meet and also an Equestrian enthusiast. When Gina's not running, MTB riding, paddling or swimming she is taking of here family and her horses out in Yandina. Gina was an XPD Finisher 2013 so she brings plenty of experience to the team having been in the sport the longest. Gina always stands out in the crowd because she in 'NOT' matching and because of her cheeky smile!

Cass Kimlin – 'Cass' -
comes from
Maryborough and



teaches PE in Hervey Bay. Cass comes from a very successful Triathlon background and funnily enough first met Kim when she was representing Queensland in Triathlon back in the 90's. Now that Cassie has many Ironman Triathlon finishes under her belt she has more recently ventured off-road and taken to sport of AR and

Multisport. Cass is one tough chick and brings to the team 'humbleness', a quality that nowadays seems to be overlooked.

Alex Austin – 'OZ' - is Noosa based PE Teacher who also coaches nippers for the Sunshine Beach Surf Club, whilst managing the 'Surfing Excellence Program' at his school. Alex is a well-travelled young man of many talents and brings a sense of youth and enthusiasm to the team. Alex has taken to navigation like a duck to water and is so excited about where XPD will take him and the team.

Dyson Findlay – 'Mr Findlay' as known to the Qantas flight staff as he flies back and forth from Karratha in WA. Dyson with a background in cross country skiing took up Triathlon several years ago when he moved to Noosa and joined the Noosa Tri Club. However more recently decided to have a go at some off-road events and following his completion of the Xterra World Champs in Hawaii, it seems 2015 XPD became the next challenge on the bucket list. Dyson will certainly keep the team entertained with his Kiwi antics...hey cuzzie bro!

Jan and Kim have also had the opportunity to assist and support a few more adventure racers who will also be on the start line of XPD Townsville racing under a few different team names.

Heather Fearby-Roberts –Team Rubicon



Lysanne De-Graff – L Platers



Have the best time out there all of you.....you have prepared for this event for a long time now, so take it all in your stride and capture the beauty of your surrounds every moment, and store those memories that you will cherish forever.

POSTED BY TRIADVENTURE NOOSA AT 6:34 PM

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