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Team AdventureJunkie.com.au won Geoquest!

Finished first place in 24hrs 27min 15sec (a new record time for Geoquest apparently)

This was the team's first hit out since Godzone and we had finally recovered from that epic expedition and were excited and ready to race together again.



- Hugh Stodart D team captain and chief navigator
- Serge Kurov D second navigator on foot
- Josh Street D backup bike navigator, team welfare captain and general packhorse/strongman/fix-it-guy
- Bernadette Dornom D token chick (and primary author in case you were wondering)

Ably supported by

- Duncan (brother of Hugh) chief support crew officer bringing a wealth of experience and tactical support
- Jamie (son of Hugh) with enthusiasm and helpfulness to burn just waiting till he is old enough to race himself
- Jurgen (friend of Josh) chief enthusiast and likely converted participant for next year

Leg 1 Bonny Hills Sea Kayak and Mega Split

Course & Navigation comments: The navigation was pretty straight forward, but the megasplit (ie the team can split up and get the checkpoints individually) made it very strategic with lots of options combining running and paddling.

With the cancellation of the ocean kayak component of leg 1 we had disappointment from our seafaring captain Hugh, although could not contain the jumps of joy from land loving Josh. The mega split first leg provided endless prerace discussions on strategies and tactics that were debated right up until the start line. When the start gun sounded Hugh and Bern paddled off to collect the 2 CPs in Gogley's Lagoon which required a fair bit of wading with the kayak making us wish that we had portaged from the start. Then Hugh dropped Bern off at the Laurieton boat ramp to run and collect 2 land based CPs before heading back to the transition area. Hugh then paddled solo to collect the southernmost CP then paddle back to transition. Meanwhile Josh and Serge paddled north up Stingray creek collecting the first checkpoint by boat but then leaving the kayak and splitting up to each collect the remainder checkpoints of foot before rendezvousing back at the kayak to then paddle back to transition together. Turned out our strategy worked pretty well as not only did Josh and Serge meet up with Hugh about 300m from transition but Bern could see the two boats paddling as she ran towards transition all arriving within a minute of each other.



Leg 2 Grants Beach Coastal Hike 8km

This was a straight forward run up the coast with a mix of pavement, trails, headlands and beach with two straight forward CPs to find on the way.

We left the TA in first place but were caught by the all male team Percival Property early on as they took a more efficient route to the 4WD track behind the beach. We were then joined by Thoughtsports/Shotz and Mountain Designs so the coastal run quickly became quite social as we compared leg 1 stories (one of the joys of Adventure racing and Geoquest (particularly when you put Josh and Leo together)).

Leg 3 Burrawan Forrest D Heron Creek Bike 35km

The first section was up the hill and through a local MTB park with a few CPs located on various single track sections, followed by a ride inland with a short "history orienteering" interlude at Heron Creek.

This leg on the bike soon had a rude awakening as we hit a steep hike-a-bike section to the first CP. Once again the 4-5 lead

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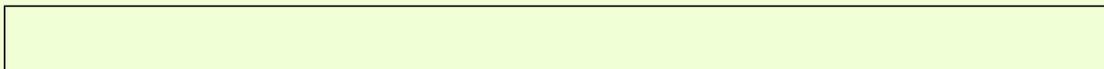
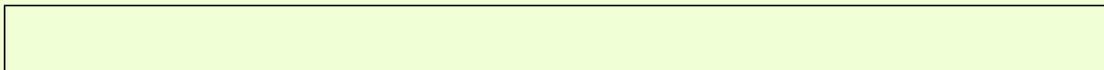
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Adventure Junkie
23 June at 17:14

Race report is up - thank's Bern Dornom an Hugh Stodart for putting it together, thanks Geocentric Outdoors crew for supplying professional shots!



teams all swapping position numerous times taking slightly different routes through some single track and fire roads. We cottoned on to the map and signage we had to read for the history orienteering slightly faster than the bunch we arrived with, so left with a slim lead for the ride up the hill to the rogaine.



Leg 4 Fork Creek Rogaine 8km

We got the CP locations in transition so quick assessment of options was required. There was an obvious loop so the main question was clockwise vs anti-clockwise.

We managed to come into the TA just slightly ahead of Peak Adventure with Thought sports hot on their tails. We went in a clockwise direction whilst most other teams collected these CPs in anticlockwise direction. We continued to set a steady pace running downhills and flats and walking ups.

Returning to where we had left our bikes at the TA we were back in third position with Thoughtsports having a 15 minute gap and Peak Adventure not too far ahead of us.

Leg 5 Bulls Ground Forrest to Winerey Bike 10km

Short and mainly downhill, but a couple of CPs on old (ie often overgrown) logging trails made this a bit of a lottery for trail selection.

Hugh navigated expertly through the tricky and often overgrown trails in this area, recognising some of them from a previous Wildside AR. Bern had a bit of fun with a small excursion off her bike at one point serving only to cover herself in mud. We came into the TA at the winery having taken a more direct route and jumped into second place. We were met by our support crew and birthday cake as it was Serge's birthday. Having just enough time to blow out his candles and Josh to do a short media interview we quickly transitioned for the following hike





Leg 6 Broken Bago Hike and Roping (Abseil) 22km

Simple navigation mostly on major roads and trails so this leg was all about speed.

Leaving the TA as darkness set in we were met by a not so friendly, in fact very irate, quarry man in his grader a little surprised by our team wandering past him. Think he was in for a bigger shock when the rest of the field started to come past. As night fell we arrived at the abseil as Thoughtsports were halfway through. There was a bit of a delay as the second rope was out of action, temporarily having started to fray as it rubbed over a sharp edge. Worth waiting for that to be fixed. We could see the night lights of Wauchope in the distance. We were joined by Peak Adventure as we ran down some steep tracks, then fire roads, then a bit of street race through Wauchope to get to the start of the next kayak.

Leg 7 Balyngara Creek Paddle 17km

This paddle up the meandering river gave rise to some portage options that had some risk, but gave significant potential gains. Finding the turns in the dark meant we had to keep concentrating.

Peak Adventure transitioned quickly and we managed to score their leftover hot pizza (Thanks Kim!). As they paddled off down the river we (having been encouraged by reports of Thoughtsports portaging and already being back on the river) carried our boats up and over the bridge, across quite a few paddocks and fencing to put in at the start of a small river tributary effectively cutting off the first 4 kms of the paddle. We later learned that the farmer, whose paddock we had traversed, had called the police, not happy we were crossing his land (Sorry for that trouble Louise.) We navigated the river system in the fog and darkness well somehow. The portage option must have been effective as when we got to the transition we learned, much to our surprise, we were the first team to arrive, having put in after our portage ahead of Peak Adventure and passing Thoughtsports as they did a few extra kms up an alternate river route.



Leg 8 Bellangry Road Ride 35km

Long plod mostly on bitumen with one token CP.

Road riding but lots of hills especially one never ending dirt road hill up to the transition. We rode most of this ride with team Peak Adventure again having a few good laughs and chats out on course.

Leg 9 The punchbowl Rogaine 16km

Again we only got the CPs in transition. With the requirement to collect 6 of 8 CPs strategies were plentiful. There were no really obvious options so we chose a route that looked easy for nav and which kept us on trails as much as possible (at least that's what we thought at the time).

The crux of the race and what eventuated as where the race was won for us. Hugh and Serge copied the CPs from the master map and then tried to plot the best most accessible route to collect 6 out of 8 CPs that we needed to get. Josh and Bern managed to sneak in some cheeky fire time as we swapped stories with the CP staff. Well this leg certainly had lots of bush bashing and felt like such slow going as we slogged our way over lots of wind-fallen trees. Our navigation remained strong though as CPs kept appearing in front of us, but we struggled a bit with a number of the trails we planned to use being overgrown and either slowing us down or forcing us to cover extra distance.

As we headed back to the TA after 5 hrs on foot we passed a few teams just heading out. Arriving at the TA we were nervous to check which other teams had already come in feeling like we had taken longer than we should have. Again we were pleasantly surprised to find out we were the first team to arrive back and in the lead. Better keep our skates on then and get on our bikes.



Leg 10 Rollands Plains Ride 24km

The first part of this ride had a couple of CPs on the less major forest trails – again a bit of a lottery in regrowth forests.

The ride to the first CP was a bit slow on our route due to more of those annoying fallen trees, but after collecting the first one and getting back up on the ridges, the ride down to the TA to the start of the final paddle was largely downhill which was welcomed.

Leg 11 Wilson/Hastings Rivers Paddle 29km less a portage

Straight down the river with the only interest coming from a couple of very attractive portage options.

We knew we had the lead coming into this leg and so it was our race to lose from here. Strategy was don't stuff it up. Daylight was just breaking as we paddled off after some warm soup and encouragement from our support crew, which we hadn't seen since the end of leg 7. The decision to portage our kayaks across a 1km road section to cut out nearly 7km of kayak was motivated not only by being quicker but it was great to stretch the legs out of the kayak.

After collecting the final CP34 we thought we were doing the right thing paddling behind the ferry (as per water rules) but perhaps went a little closer than we intended due to the tide and the ferry driver did not seem too happy & he was about to meet quite a few kayakers throughout the day some of whom would test his patience more than us.

Our final obstacle was a portage over the weir where we passed some Geohalf teams. Serge and Josh also learnt how slippery the weir was, much to the amusement of Hugh and Bern. In the final few kms of the Hastings River we finally let ourselves enjoy the fact that we were about to cross the line as winners.

The race was a rare and amazing experience and achievement for us as a team. Adventure racing is about minimizing mistakes and recovering fast when you do make them. It was very satisfying to have a race where we did not need the recovery bit.





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