

Simpson Desert Bike Challenge Newsletter

July 2007

Race dates for 2007: 2nd – 6th October

Hi everyone,

Just two months remain until the remote campsite at Purni Bore on the western edge of the Simpson Desert begins to fill up with assorted 4WDs, mountain bikes and a motley array of cyclists, support crew and race officials, preparing for the start of the 2007 Simpson Desert Bike Challenge.

Your plans for travel to and from the event and for support while racing should now be well under way.

Getting to the start at Purni Bore is sometimes considered to be almost as difficult as actually riding the course.

Make sure you allow plenty of travel time and plan to arrive at Purni Bore by Monday lunchtime. Arriving early gives you time to begin to acclimatise, set up your bike, take it out for a spin and adjust as necessary. Support crews will need to check vehicles, organise your packing system and locate the corkscrew.

Meeting Points:

As in previous years, there will be a group meeting point en route to Purni Bore. All participants are welcome to meet up with and join the convoy at this point.

For those travelling from the southern states the meeting point is in Coober Pedy, South Australia. Meet at the service station opposite the Opal Cave in the main street on Sunday 30th September at 9am. The convoy will be going on via Oodnadatta (last fuel/tyre repairs), reaching Purni Bore on Monday. Make sure you collect your drinking water supplies from Coober Pedy.

For road information prior to beginning your journey check with the following:

Desert Parks Hotline: 1800 816 078

Transport SA Roads Hotline: 1300 361 033 (for road updates outside the National Park)

On-line updates: www.parks.sa.gov.au

See also the 'Getting to the Start' section of the Desert Challenge website (www.desertchallenge.org) for detailed information on travelling to the race.

The Explore Oz website also has a comprehensive section on unsealed road conditions. Visit www.exploroz.com/Roads/SA.asp

Currently all routes are open. Allow around 2 hours to drive the 70km track between Dalhousie Hot Springs and Purni Bore.

Attendance at the pre-race briefing is compulsory for all competitors and support crew. At the briefing all competitors will register and receive their pre-race packs including bike numbers. All support crew members will also be required to sign in at the briefing.

Following the pre-race briefing there will be a short driver education session. This is an opportunity for all support crew drivers to get together, receive information about the anticipated driving conditions and tips for vehicle management. First timers to the Desert and those with limited or non-existent 4WD experience can be buddied with an experienced driver to provide support and assistance.

Post Race Celebrations

One reason for taking part in the race is for the sheer joy (& relief) of rolling across the finish line right outside the Birdsville Pub. Opening time is 10am, hence the support crew may well be in good voice by the time the first rider breasts the tape.

Current race protocol for the final stage has virtually all support crews sent forward to Birdsville. The convoy generally arrives very early so there is plenty of time for crews to check in to their accommodation, clean up and wander across to the Pub before the first riders arrive. Locals, any passing tourists and the odd stray dog join the melee alongside the finish line.

Accommodation in Birdsville is limited - book ahead if you want a room. Unpowered camping at the Caravan Park along the river is no problem - no need to book for this.

The Birdsville Hotel has some accommodation - phone (07) 4656 3244. The campground also has a limited number of cabins available - phone (07) 4656 3214 or email them on birdsvillecvanpk@growzone.com.au

All riders should be finished by around midday and the official celebrations begin soon after. The Pub puts on an excellent meal for us, this is followed by

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the Presentation, Charity Auction and wrap up of the official stuff before erupting into generally raucous behaviour.

Hydration Tips:

Former Medic and rider Dr Mal returned to the Desert in 2006 to undertake some research on weight changes in cyclists competing in the race. Deciding to use himself as a guinea pig, he rode the race and monitored his and other competitor's pre and post stage weights over the nine stages. The results and analysis make for interesting and very relevant reading.

Check out his report on the DOWNLOADS page of the race website (www.desertchallenge.org).

2007 Anniversary Celebrations:

This year's race celebrates 20 years of MTB madness in the Simpson Desert. A few faces from days gone by will be greeting us as we arrive at the finish in Birdsville and joining us for the post-race bash. This event was one of the very first mountain biking adventure races in Australia and one of few to have stood the test of time.....

Water Stop Crew:

One of the best sights during a racing stage is that first glimpse of a 4WD parked trackside with a shady spot under the awning and a couple of friendly faces waiting to welcome you in. These are the Race Water Stop Crews, volunteers who happily sit out in the heat and flie for hours on end awaiting the arrival of sometimes exhausted and evil tempered riders. Many have been volunteers with the race for years and are familiar with desiccated desperados wobbling along the track to collapse in a heap outside the nirvana of the Water Stop. Their job is to ensure all riders are checked through the Water Stop, given their fluid supplies and a place to rest in the shade if needed. Generally it's the friendly face and sympathetic ear that is most appreciated. A Medic will often be stationed at a Water Stop to provide medical attention if required. Whether you require water supplies or not, all competitors must come to a complete halt at each Water Stop - penalties apply for failure to do so.

General Update:

We are seeking an additional Medic to accompany the race and assist with any medical issues during the event. This is a volunteer position. We may be able to help with transport if you are interested in the position but do not have access to a 4WD vehicle.

For further information please contact loujai@optusnet.com.au

We welcome donation of items for the charity auction to be held at the Pub following the race. Please let us know if you are able to assist with this.

Fines Sessions: All competitors and crews are considered fair game for the nightly Fines Session held at the briefing each evening during the race. Fines are \$2 (maximum per person of \$10) with all proceeds going to 4Wheels4Sean. Nominations for fines are to be passed to the Finesmaster before 6pm each day of the race.

If you haven't already done so now is a good time to download the Rider and Support Crew Information packs from the event website - make sure that your support crew has access to this information as they set up ready for the upcoming race.

Remember: *'success is sweet but it usually has a strong smell of sweat about it*

See you out there ...

Gaye (Flipper)