

Simpson Desert Bike Challenge Newsletter

Jan 2008

Race dates for 2008: 30th Sep – 4th October

Hi everyone,

Planning is now well underway for the 2008 event. Entries opened on 1st January - see the website for details and entry form.

Two-time competitor Heinz Von Holzen from Bali was the first entry received, he has been joined by a first time competitor from Slovakia, and the first entrant from Australia has also signed up. Interest is high and numbers will be limited to 40 riders - if this is your year then get in early and start preparing now.



Early Race Planning:

Once you have made a commitment to the event you need to start preparing for the race: think about your personal preparation, equipment preparation and your support crew.

Personal preparation is largely about your physical training - even in 'good' conditions this is a demanding event. At this stage you should be focusing on building your endurance with regular long slow road rides, pushing out your distance until you are comfortable spending at least six consecutive hours in the saddle. Now is also the time to begin trying various nutritional supplements - look for drink mixes, gels etc that you can tolerate while cycling, especially in hot, dry conditions and when you feel stressed. Remember that if it's complicated to prepare and eat now then it is going to way too hard when you're out in the Desert.



The race starts Tuesday morning - you are required to be at Purni Bore by Monday afternoon to register and attend the pre-race briefing. Depending on where you depart from you will need to allow 3-4 days to reach Purni Bore. If travelling from a cooler climate, the more time you have to adjust to the escalating temperatures the better. Planning to reach Purni Bore on the Sunday pre-race gives you a full day to rest and check and prepare your bike.



This race is an excellent excuse to buy a new bike, although many choose to use their current favourite. The jury is out on the hardtail vrs full suspension question..... it really comes down to personal preference. If you go the hardtail route, consider a suspension seatpost to provide some extra cush for your tush the Simpson Desert features some of the most arse-busting corrugations ever experienced. Five days of these can have devastating consequences for the unprepared. A second seat is essential - bring the saddle you think you will race on and then throw in a padded, gel, sprung, granny-type seat that no way would you ever be seen dead using. If you don't

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need it you can probably sell it to someone else for a fortune by day 4.



Your support crew will play a vital role in getting you across the Desert. If you do not have access to a reliable large capacity 4WD vehicle and driver then there are a few options:

1. Team up with others. Two vehicles and 3-4 crew can comfortably support three riders. This works well as one vehicle can go ahead in the lead convoy to provide support as riders cross the finish line while the other vehicle travels in the rear convoy to pick up any riders 'swept'. Contact us if you would like to team up with others to arrange support.
2. Hire a large capacity 4WD such as a Toyota Troopcarrier. This can be a good option for a group of three needing two vehicles.
3. A number of experienced support crew with vehicles are looking for riders to support this year. Costs are negotiable depending on the level of support provided. Contact us if you are looking for a support crew or if you are interested in offering your vehicle and services to support a rider.

Upcoming AGM:

The race is operated by a not-for-profit Incorporated Association – Desert Challenge Inc. The Association AGM will be held on Saturday 26th January in Adelaide. All those interested are welcome to attend.

Full details are on the website. Current members will have received a letter of notification of the AGM.

All race supporters are invited to join Desert Challenge Inc. An annual Membership can be purchased via the website. Membership benefits include voting on the election of the Committee and the option of being nominated for a position on the Committee.



Photogenic Mathias

General Update:

The Vivid Adventures photo CDs from the 2007 event have now been distributed. These can be ordered via the Merchandise page on the website. Thanks to Andrew and the Vivid Adventures team for donating the images for the CD.

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Anyone with monies from personal fundraising to be donated to 4Wheels4Sean for the 2007 year - please contact Su Spencer on (08) 8325 0301 so that this can be included in the fundraising cheque to be presented.

Desert'07 - by Kathy Moylan

*.....Be waited on hand & foot
.....Sun loungers available
.....Unlimited food
(Must be willing to be clad in lycra)*

For an experience that is worth repeating - come along and join other enthusiastic people. Wide open spaces, sun & sand, views to die for, and lots of boys!

The Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is waiting for YOU

As most of you already know, Kathy had a great time cycling over a lot of sand dunes (going down is always fun), not so much fun with her bike chain (but is pleased to report that yesterday she broke & then fixed a bike chain - now to do it under race conditions, not). Eating tuna and drinking coke is actually fine, as is consuming just about everything and never feeling guilty about the number of jelly beans consumed. Lazing on a sun lounge with feet in a water bath twice a day was not a luxury but a necessity, as was dunking riding tops in water at least twice during the lunch break.

The cycling is challenging with dunes, sand, head winds, sand, the Sweep, sand, the bottom factor, sand, corrugations (get yourself a dual suspension), sand. And the rewards are even better. Once on top of a dune the only way is down and what fun that is. Head winds do keep you cool, the Sweep is very kind when he pulls you off the course (and you do get a free ride to the end of the stage), and sand is very soft to fall into. There is lots of time for head space stuff and certainly meditation could be on the cards. The camaraderie between all the riders was supportive and encouraging. And the encouragement by my support crew (Ray), Andrew & Robyn, other riders and support crew and all the officials - waterstops, doctors (not required by me), course officials and race directors was fabulous. The race is well organised.

Meeting other riders was fun. 'Why are you here?' and 'Are you coming back?' were frequently asked questions, as was the discussion of the state of

bottoms. (nothing is sacred in the Desert.) Only four riders had participated previously tho the other woman, Cara, had been a support person in other years. The challenge of completing 100% will compel many of us to return. Being part of a community drives many of us in our 'normal' lives and the Simpson Desert Bike Challenge is a moving community, a bit surreal as we camped between dunes, near old stockyards and created a train during daylight hours - cars, bikes, cars. Only to disperse after feeding our mortal bodies in the Birdsville Pub. But our souls will be forever linked to the experience and the other players on the stage.

And as reported in the Advocate it was just one sentence from John Dermody that set me on this course. I hope that other girls find that one person who says just the right words to encourage them to participate in this event. The experience is worth any pain that may be encountered along the way.



Kathy bites the dust

See you out there ...

Gaye (Flipper)

Photos: courtesy of Vivid Adventures from 2007 race