



2006 VAUDE HIGHLAND FLING

11-12 November 2006, Southern Highlands, NSW

THE WRAP UP

The Haggis dare to venture from their burrows again, the highland cattle maintain the air of nonchalance they had all weekend and my kilt rejoins the mothballs for another year. A thin brown line remains; tracking 109km across the farmland and forests of the Southern Highlands.

The 06 Fling was well and truly Flung last Sunday and a Dash was done too. Thanks for being part of it.

1100 riders were entered. 564 finished the 109km Full Fling, 81 gave it their best shot but didn't cross the finish line and 43 didn't make it to the Start. 353 finished the 58km Half Fling, 5 didn't finish and 28 didn't start. 9 Flinging Threesomes teams started, 1 didn't finish. 7 100Mile Flingers started, 4 didn't finish and 2 didn't make it to the Startline.

The Riding

The **Bundanoon Dash** was a tasty **Entrée** on Saturday evening with 70 riders dashing the 6km course from the centre of Bundanoon into Morton NP and a cruel finish up Constitution Hill. Shaun Lewis devoured the course in 0:11:07 ahead of Nick Both in 0:11:14 with 100Mile entrant Dennis Van Mil 3rd in 0:11:22. Renee Fortunato was first woman across the line in 0:12:01 and 9th overall, ahead of Claire Haugh (0:12:23) and Josephine Lanzarone (0:14:39).

To the Main Course

The **2006 VAUDE Highland Fling** had a number of worthy course changes from 2005. The addition of Boags Draft/Pigs Fly was enjoyed by many in the first 30km VAUDE Stage, the new singletrack in the 50km Forests NSW Stage found to be challenging but enjoyable (endurable for some!) 48km into the race. The GU20 drinks station after 70km was a lifesaver for some. A cut back through some new singletrack in the final 29km Specialized Stage was tackled with tired legs after over 90km out on the trail.

The overall view was of a highly varied, highly enjoyable course, never on the same type of track for too long. A real MTB marathon. A few 2006 changes in the first 10km, meant that, despite another 350 riders, the bottlenecks were minor. The overall buzz on the course was one of respect for fellow riders whether elite or recreational. Thanks to all riders for that!

The VAUDE Highland Fling offers all mountain bikers the chance to take their own personal challenge. To ride fast, to ride slow, to dress up, to see some of the finest MTB terrain in Australia, to win prizes for coming first, last or somewhere in the middle, for having a birthday, a stack, a story to tell. The Fling offered a creche facility to allow both parents or single parents a ride. The Fling even provided the 2006 luxury of a banana for every rider!

The Results

The day dawned cool and overcast with a blood red sky. With 30 degrees forecast it was to be a warm ride. The 45 Elite Full Flingers set off with the Half Flingers 30 minutes behind the main Full Fling pack and the chase was on to catch the pack during the 29km VAUDE Stage. At the Transition, Shaun Lewis, Matt Fleming, Aiden Lefman and the Fling Dutchman, Dirk Van Der Walle were wheel to wheel.

The Full Flingers and 100Mile Flingers then headed onto the 50km Forests NSW Stage. The Wall, Fern Gully, Tangles, Halfway Hill and The Kick all took their toll on many. Lewis, Fleming and Lefman pulled away from Van Der Walle but Shaun dropped Matt on the grinding climb up The Kick. After 80km, back at Wingello Transition, Shaun had a lead of a minute or so and plunged into the final 29km Specialized Stage determined to improve upon his 2nd place in 2005. A fast farmland descent into Penrose State Forest followed before heading to the steep, barely rideable Gauntlet and the enjoyable singletrack that followed. A climb up to the Yacht Club and a fast descent to the steady climb up through the Great Sandy Desert to Your Call, at 105km, a frazzled brain confusing route choice. A fast 3km to the Finish saw Shaun Lewis as victor in the 2006 VAUDE Highland Fling in 4:18:53 with Matt Fleming in 2nd place on 4:23:23 and Dirk Van Der Walle marking a successful bleeding in his first Australian race with a 3rd place in 4:27:24. Shaun had shaken the haggis off his back after a string of 2nd places in MTB marathons in 2005/06.

In the Womens Elite Full Fling, Katrin Van Der Spiegel (5:18:29) had a great race and took the \$1000 cheque, finishing ahead of Renee Fortunato (5:23:37) and Kimberley Fleming (5:44:00). The three women had finished the VAUDE Stage in close succession but it was in the Forests NSW Stage that Katrin pulled away and maintained her lead until the end.



Shaun and Katrin take the money



11 bravehearts went into battle with only one gear. In this Singlespeed category, Steve Fitchett rode away with the category in 5:09:34, finishing a hugely respectable 22nd Overall.

Meanwhile only 3 riders remained in competition in the 100Mile Fling after the first 109km, with other riders having either pulled out or did not meet the (too?) severe 5.5hr cutoff time for the 109km. Dennis Van Mil had 15 minutes or so over Adam Socha and Andrew Mannings only just made the cut-off. After an inspirational ride, Van Mil finished in 7:43:43 with Socha in 2nd place in 7:55:54. In a move that epitomised the spirit of the Fling, Dennis donated his \$600 winnings to the numerous community groups who use the Fling to raise much needed funds.

In the Half Fling, 05 winner Joey Esterhuyzen again blitzed the field winning with a huge 10 minute margin in 2:31:54 over Wade Carberry (2:41:52) and Hamish Gorman (2:42:47). Womens Half Fling winner, Janine Ridsdale (2:50:16), was also in 8th overall, a remarkable effort, with Claire Haugh and Christelle Van Niekirk in 2nd and 3rd.

All other category placegetters and full Interim Results can be found on www.wildhorizons.com.au. Please note these are interim results so if you have a query on your time/result then please drop an email to timing@wildhorizons.com.au and we'll make necessary corrections. Please do this asap.

The Thanks

VAUDE outdoor and cycle products are the Headline Sponsor of the Fling and we thank them hugely for their support and involvement again this year. Ground Effect cycle clothing, Specialized bikes, GU nutrition products and Forests NSW are our Major Sponsors. Please do support these brands when considering your next bike and outdoor gear purchases. Apart from Forests NSW unless you're in the timber trade! They are hugely supportive of mountain biking in our forests.

Any Wild Horizons event is nothing without the Dark Side. Our crew who spend days putting out signs, working on registration, building Event Centres, working out on the course, the Event Centre, the Transition etc etc. Thanks to each and every one of the 40 or so people on the Dark Side. In particular I would like to pass on my appreciation for the efforts of Rob 'Marsh' Marlow our Marshall Coordinator, Chris Bayliss, Ant Schnabel, Fiona Dick, Peter Saw, Rik Eagles, Patrick Fitzgerald, Zac Dooling, Art Lidbetter, David Croft, Roger Jones, Guy L'Estrange, Amber Weyman, Ben Mount, Cecilia Barry, Jeff Rooney and his crew. And of course to Wendy Kingston for controlling the admin and looking after the registration with her crew of Kate Chown, Lyn Montgomery, Chris Eagles, Lucy Bainger and thanks to our timing gurus.



A dash to be done

Adrian Reynolds did a magnificent job of coordinating the Rural Fire Service marshals, Ray Gill and Terry Matts from the VRA sorted out our radio comms. St John Ambulance found that whilst major carnage was rare, they needed to tear up the curtains of their caravan in an attempt to find something, anything, to patch up cuts and bruises. Legend Cycles kept many a bike on the trail and Rock'n'Roll Lube stopped chains from snapping.

Maxxis Tyres, Sigma Computers, Flinger Bike Products, Pigs Fly Beer, the Otway Oddysey, Bright Orange Events and the Bundanoon Country Inn all added to the \$30000 worth of prizes and prize money. Ennerdale Highland Cattle provided cows, Will provided bagpipes. Greg and Di Joice, Robert and Barbara Boag, Bob and Gladys Jefferies provided access into their properties, as key sections in the VAUDE Highland Fling course. Thanks indeed for that. The Resource Recovery Centre worked with us on waste minimization and YOU helped by keeping litter on the course to a minimum (the GU Trashpaks were good).

One lucky rider headed home with a \$3000 Specialized bike voucher (and can you please contact us as we've lost your name!).



Melissa Le Quesne and Terry Egginton both are headed to New Zealand in March to ride the Kona Colville Connection, our NZ MTB

Marathon partner event www.colvilleconnection.co.nz.

Thanks to Pacific Blue airline for supporting these prizes with flights across the ditch.



The Community, the Spirit

The VAUDE Highland Fling is also a fundraiser for numerous community groups in the villages of Bundanoon, Penrose, Exeter and Wingello. Over **\$24,000** was raised over the weekend by these groups. Thanks to all of you for that support. In a move that mirrors Dennis Van Mil's generosity and the spirit of the race, Razi Robertson who ran the crèche for the Fling, donated her earnings into the community pot too.

The kids from Bundanoon and Exeter School drew up excellent representations of different features out on the course to keep you entertained.

We have received so many comments from riders and community that reflect their mutual appreciation:

A Rider Comment

A huge thank you for what was a tremendous weekend. The ride itself was superb, (loved the singletrack) the camaraderie among riders and the encouragement from locals, spectators, kids paintings on the course and marshals helped me finish the course and achieve my goal of not having DNF beside my name.

A special thanks to all those volunteers: the fire brigades, pony club, lions club, the schools, rescue guys, the blokes at the lube station and the soccer club. The use of their time and facilities made the ride a success.

A Community Comment

We must say we have done a fair amount of catering in the past, and all of us agreed on Sunday, that the biking competitors would have to be the most polite, nicest and appreciative group of people we have ever served a meal to!! What a great bunch!



The Australian MTB Marathon Championships



AUSTRALIAN MTB MARATHON CHAMPIONSHIPS

The VAUDE Highland Fling was announced as the Australian MTB Marathon Championships long before the title was copied by another event.

Our intention was to reward the average riders who make up the bulk of entries in a mass participation MTB event. With this in mind we will be presenting the green&gold tartan Championship jersey to the Male and Female rider who completed the Full Fling in a time closest to the average time for their sex. You may have seen this jersey at Registration!

Currently the Average from the Mens Times stands at 7:06:57 and that for Women at 7:16:11. This may change a little after final results are published after any further queries. We will make the announcement next week.....

The Apology



Recognizing the importance of caffeine at dawn, we'd organized for two coffee vans this year. It pained me to see a snaking, shaking queue in front of one van and a bare spot next to it. The second van turned up an hour or so later having been stopped en route by a kangaroo. Then the 3rd barista due to pump the groupset on the first van never turned up.

Our coffee man, Tim, was puzzled but was too busy to worry. Then on Sunday night he discovered that Barista No 3 had written off his car at 4-30am heading to the event and spent the day concussed. Can we forgive them? I think so.

The Memories

Photos are now up on www.cycle-photos.com so check out how you looked out on the course.



Shots from our photographers will be up on www.wildhorizons.com.au very soon

The Future

The 2007 VAUDE Highland Fling takes place on 10-11 November. Before then we have our Urban Polaris event in Canberra on December the 3rd, this is part of the Brindabella Challenge festival of cycling events. Also don't forget the Berghaus Polaris Challenge on March 10-11. Full details and entries on www.wildhorizons.com.au



The bits we can't be bothered categorizing.....

There is some lost property from the weekend (why are only cheap sunglasses ever handed in?) so drop us an email if you flung something away on the ride.

There are some prizes here for placegetters who had left before the presentation. We will contact you in the coming weeks to arrange collection.

Feel free to send us any reports on your day for the website

More prizes

And finally in the spirit of winning more prizes. The first people to correctly email answers to the following questions on Scots language will be sent a Ground Effect prize voucher. Email to fling@wildhorizons.com.au after 2pm Friday 16th

What is the meaning of the following words? Both words refer to something you might have experienced in the Fling!

- Wabbit
- Mauchit

Thanks again to all of you for being part of the 2006 VAUDE Highland Fling

See you next year.

Enjoy the ride. Enjoy the summer

Cheers.....Huw Kingston

