



Team BIGFISH Race report on the AROC Sport Umina Adventure Race Saturday 16th September '06

- Team BIGFISH - Gazza (Bluefin), Marky (Mako) & Dudey Boy (Barracuda)
- Team BIGFISH Fingers - Son (Pilot Fish), Brentster (Wahoo) & Borzi (Groper)

This was an exciting day for Team BIGFISH being the launch of the new team racing strip. Prior to the start of this AR season (this race) a lot of work has been done in preparing the team gear and finding some sponsors. Everyone was pumped to get the smart new outfit and start racing.

5:00 am - The alarm clocks are going off & the BIGFISH are awakening from their all too short slumbers.

5:30 am - In the car collect our team-mates for the drive up the coast

7:30 am - Bike Drop off at Pearl Beach

8:00 am - Team Registration - collect maps, race info pack and race bibs

8:05 am - Team preparation - read the race instructions, mark up map, contact the map and instructions and get our new racing gear on, take some photos, pack the backpacks with mandatory gear, food & water. Psyche ourselves up

9:30 am - Race Briefing with Tom. Everything we need to know about the course and the race rules.

10:00 am - Race Start. Everything's ready & Alina sounds the hooter and away we go. Yeehah.



We are off at last! First a 200m dash up the beach around the AROC flag and back to the kayaks. Amongst the mass of 200 or so bodies both our teams manage to find a kayak and head off to sea, out around the first rocky point and across the Pearl Beach to TA (Transition Area) #1. It is a beautiful day and the water is blue and sparkling. This is great fun!

Having landed on the beach the next job was to carry the kayaks up the beach and load them onto the trailer, then one team member with swim goggles had to race back down the beach, swim out to a buoy, dive down and note the clue provided for Checkpoint (CP) #7. Now we head off on the first run leg to collect CP's 1-5 up into the bush scrambling up rocks into a creek and over a small waterfall. Through scrub and small tracks to find the Cp's on knolls, under waterfalls, in creeks and even the colour of a letterbox. This done it was back to the beach and check in at TA



2, collect our bikes and head off along the beach and onto the hills to collect CP#7 (we did remember the location from our diving) on the way to TA3. Drop the bikes and helmets and a short run down the hill-side (we love the down hill sections) into Patonga Beach to TA 4 & collect our kayaks. A short fast paddle across the bay to the far end on the beach, then off the kayaks, swim 30m across the channel and a great coasteering run out around the headland to collect CP#8. Return to the kayaks via the coast and another cool swim across the channel and a paddle through the shallow channel down to Hardy's bay and drop off the kayaks for the last time (well at least for some of the teams). Another run and climb up the a hill side had get CP#9 and we were heading to CP#10. On the way we ran back to where we did the first kayak leg at Patonga to find we (Team BIGFISH) were in the top 20 teams (8th in fact) and so we got to do a "Bonus Leg" . A bonus leg saw us issued with a new map and had us doing another kayak leg at least double the length of the last one around to Little Patonga

Beach, then a rogaine through the bush, up creeks, along spurs and saddles collecting another 5 CPs. Then you can guess, another kayak paddle back to where it started and clock in at TA5. Team BIGFISH Fingers suffered a falt tyre early on, so they were lucky enough to avoid having to do the "BONUS". So some 1½ hours later we dropped off the kayaks and headed out to collect CP10 up and old creek bed, back down the creek and a hard slog back up the steep hill side (it was so nice when we were on the way down), Finally then back at TA6 which was the last Transition, we collect our bikes and head off to find the CP's 11 to 19 and onto the finish line. Some great scenery along the last bike leg with fire trails, single track, flat rock knolls and some steep technical sections. This took us back down to civilisation again and the final few checkpoints including collecting codes from power poles, colours of letterboxes and colour of an old trailer. Unfortunately on this leg Gazza's



chain decided to break and the last two km's had to freewheel and pushed by the other boys. Lost 3 or 4 places as a result. The final section was about one kilometre run/push along the beach at Umina and up through the finish gates. 5 hours had just passed and we were so happy to be stopped and to think about what we had achieved and what we then what we could eat and drink.

What a great day out! It was awesome fun.

Some fun stories emerged from our teams

BIGFISH Fingers 1) Found out when paddling with two 90kg's plus guys after 1st leg to put the lightest man at the front otherwise we became a submarine rather than a boat. 2) We must have the world record for fastest Puncture when Pilot got a flat BEFORE even getting his bike off the beach roughly a minute into the 1st Bike Leg - very sharp sand. 3) Our plastic minifish (Sea Pals) were greatly appreciated by all Volunteers including the SES, photographers. The Cameraman on last bike leg was so impressed with our gift (bribe!) of a plastic Hammerhead shark, that he decided to run with BF Fingers for the remainder of the ride. 4) Wahoo was nearly seriously injured or KILLED by an overzealous Team mate shooting a Champagne cork into his face in the post race celebration 5) Left helmets at TA1 after the kayak. & had to run back to get them.

Team BIGFISH finished 16th and Team BIGFISH Fingers finished 30th!!!

Some thank you's

AROC Sport - Tom & Alina are amazing. As usual they set a fantastic course that challenged all levels of competitors and provided great views and places to be. Well done

The Volunteers - Once again they were outstanding. They are fantastic and we love them all. They spend the whole race time manning the various TAs and course routes, always putting on a happy face and encouraging everyone. Well done once again

The Photographers - Mark & Paul. As usual they seem to be everywhere around the course. Their images that are captured from the weekend help provide us some with permanent memories of this fun adventure.

Our Sponsors:

No Roads Expeditions.

Mona Vale & Belrose Cycle Shops

Kellys Basecamp - Dee Why



We are really looking forward to the rest of the AROC series and more "excellent" adventure races - bring it on !

Written by Gazza

(aka Bluefin) for Team BIGFISH & BIGFISH Fingers

