



Team BIGFISH Race report on the AROC Sport Tharwa Outward Bound Adventure Race Saturday 16th December '06



Team BIGFISH - Gazza, Pricey & Marcus

After an enjoyable Friday night drive down from Sydney to Tharwa we found our way to Outward Bound and received a warm welcome from Zoe and her team, where we were shown to our camping site and facilities.

So then it was time to prepare the sleeping arrangements, sit down and eat our previously prepared dinner of cold pasta and bread (yum), then complete a final gear check including our bikes. It is important to have as much done the night before as possible, so that we have plenty of time the next morning to spend just on preparing ourselves and the planning our course. With all this done we hit the hay around 10:30.

5:20 am - The BIGFISH awaken to the sounds of the Kookaburra's laughing. Was this directed at us ?

5:30 am - Jeff leaves camp to take the three bikes out to the Bike Drop at nearby Gordon. While he is away we get started with breakfast and getting on the racing gear prepared.

6:15 am - We head down to register the team and collect our maps, race info pack and race bibs.

6:30 to 7:20 am - Team preparation: read the race instructions, mark up map, contact the map and instructions and get our racing gear on, take some photos, check we have the mandatory gear, food & water. Psyche ourselves up. Plus the Christmas Tinsel decorations to our backpacks

7:30 Fuelled up with our hearty brekkie and it was up to the buses where Tom gave us our final race briefing. All aboard the three buses and it was off to our secret start location along the banks of the Murrumbidgee.

Off the buses and a mass of males all went flying into the bush. What for ? Well let's just say we found a new way to end the drought !?

8:15 Race Start - All the teams are now lined up at the start line and we were off . A short but furious 400m sprint along the river bank and then head long into the Murrumbidgee and a short 25m swim across and up the bank on the other side. This first leg (of foot) of about 3½ kms would see us collect Checkpoints (CPs) 1 to 3 at various locations along the river and heading into Gordon (where we left our bikes). This was where we hit TA1 (Transition Area No.1). Here it was that Team BIGFISH unveiled it's crazy plan for the race to dress as Santa and his helpers, bringing out the red Santa bag (which was a red dry bag cleverly disguised with tinsel) and wishing all the AROC team and volunteers a Happy Christmas and giving them a present for the red Santa Sack. So it was with the presents handed out we continued onto the next leg consisting of two sections, one a short kayak paddle around Point Hut Pond to collect CP's A&B and then onto the adventure playground and down slippery dips and across wire cable bridges. Here we had collect CP 4 up high in the tower and then run back to TA2. Along the way we handed out more gifts to the volunteers stationed around the course. Time now to pack away the Santa outfits and move onto our bikes for the next leg. Pedal power had now taken over, up one nasty hill and then a fun ride, which had us collecting CP's 5 to 9 on the way back down to TA3 which was back at the Outward Bound HQ. Off the bikes, back into Santa mode, out with our red bag, more pressies and Christmas wishes and it was time to head of again. This next leg was an orienteering section up through the hills. First we had to mark our maps up using the master map provided at TA3, take out bearings and then off. We headed into "them there hills" as fast as our now tired legs would take us searching for and finding CPs 10 to 14 located behind rocks, on grassy knolls and up a gully. It was then a race back down the hill to TA4 and some more Christmas wishes and back onto the bike. Off we powered out of Outward Bound and down along the old creek bed until we hit CP15 under a tree. A short carry of the bike across the sandy section of creek, ride the trail, throw the bike over the locked gate and down to TA5. We decided to reverse the Santa procedure at this checkpoint and so dropped of the bikes and headed straight out on this rogaie leg. Off now of foot we scrambled along the racks only veering off to collect the CP's 16 to 19. One was up a gully and the next in a dry river bed, another up along the main river bed and the last, where else, up to the top of the highest hill around. Yes, we had now done all the check points and we only had a couple more tasks to do before the finish.



Yes, we had now done all the check points and we only had a couple more tasks to do before the finish.



Back to clock in at TA6, get back into our Santa gear and give out the last of the gifts and wish the fabulous volunteers a Merry Christmas.

This done, we were on our bikes and headed for the finish line. Along the way we stopped to help one team suffering from cramp, handing over a gu or two and then battled one of the girls teams all the rest of the way home. There we were right next to the finish and parking our bikes ready for the run across the finish, and what happens, one of the girls in the all excitement runs down poor old Santa. So up I got and dusted off the dirt, and then for last time donned the Santa hat and beard, team mates in tow with their Santa hats on and in to the shute and over the finish line. "Yes" we yelled, having completed another action packed fun-filled AROC adventure race. The very last one for 2006. We received a big welcome from Alina and all the people around the

Comment : While it was great fun, it was also very sad to see the state of our country side, especially the once great Murrumbidgee River. Let's all pray that we will soon get some substantial rains in these areas and allow the rivers, creeks and lands to return to somewhere near their previous beauty and awe inspiring best!

Our heartfelt thanks go to :

Outward Bound - For their hospitality and invitation onto their home to share in their 50th anniversary. Also for the great BBQ, which included a few fried flies along with the snags plus taking us on their fabulous ropes course.

The Volunteers - They were brilliant again and we love seeing them all and their smiling faces. It doesn't matter what time of the day they are always happy and encouraging everyone. Well done once again

AROC Sport - Tom, Alina, Super Celia and the AROC team . A great, fun course to finish of 2006. Well done! I would personally like to thank Tom & Alina for being such good friends with Team BIGFISH and for all the help they have provided us during 2006. THANKS!!

The Photographers - Chris & Lindy. We have known them for a while now and they are great fun to have on the course. Their photos are awesome and we look forward to seeing their results from this race.

The Other Teams - Without the rest of you and your friendly nature the races would not be worth doing. Even when we pass the leading teams they always take time to say "giddy" and acknowledge us. If anyone is ever in trouble you can be sure the next team along will stop and help no matter where they are coming. This attitude and approach to racing is what helps make Adventure Sports truly worthwhile. Well done everyone.

Our Sponsors:

No Roads Expeditions.

Mona Vale & Belrose Cycle Shops

Kellys Basecamp - Dee Why

Team BIGFISH wishes everyone out in the Adventure Racing community a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you all in 2007.

by Gazza (aka Bluefin) for Team BIGFISH

