

FOREST



understories

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The clash of the Titans

Series I: Australia vs New Zealand

Bushrangers in NZ

With six races lined up over four days, the pace in New Zealand was always going to be a fast and furious one.

As we poured over maps in the weeks leading up to the challenge we appreciated that the task ahead of us was going to be very technical. What I hadn't been so prepared for was just how physical it would be too!

The New Zealander's threw everything they had at us, terrain wise: incredibly steep, physical, thick, low visibility, technical terrain! In the first sprint race I managed to run the wrong side of a wall and end up looking into the tiger enclosure! I think the Australians equipped themselves very well, and as the Australia 'A' team competing against New Zealand's top elites we managed to battle our way in to some well-earned top finishes.

Away from the orienteering I have to say that I had a lot of fun, and hope everyone else did too! Tom Quayle was an excellent coach and manager, guiding the team through an incredibly mentally and physically draining few days with a very calm and helpful approach. Such a lot of racing leads to tired athletes, and this can lead to some frictions between team members, but not this trip. The team was all staying in one room in a cabin! Girls and boys in together. It was nice to just laze around and chat to everyone in the times that we had to relax and try to recover. Brucey Arthur had the latest computer orienteering program, Attack Point, with him, and quite a few of the boys were getting quite good at the computer version by the time we headed home. The room was still surprisingly liveable by the third day, thanks to a couple of the more domesticated boys who actually lead the charge on the washing machine! But by the last day, when everything was wet, and shoes were trying to dry by the heater... hmmm.

The most interesting map for me was the final, Classic day. This map was incredibly steep, and the sand-dune detail very tricky. At a stage where we were physically exhausted before the gun went off this was a huge trial of physical and mental strength. The greatest challenge on this map was to read very carefully, as it was often easy to confuse up from down! Tania Robinson absolutely blitzed the field on this day, she was just looking so strong out in the forest.

The best of the Australian performers in the team was Briohney, followed by Kathryn (who had an outstanding carnival and was best Australian in the other two races that counted for points), then Kirsten and Orla. It must be mentioned Anna Sheldon was the fastest Australian on this day, but as a WOC member was not included in the points tally. With only about a minute of mistakes Anna was the second around the course, but still over six minutes behind Tania's time! Women's orienteering is looking pretty strong with Kathryn and Kirsten able to out-perform one of our Australian WOC team members on one day of this highly technical orienteering.

Kirsten Fairfax

Brucey's Blog spot

I spent the NZ Queen's Birthday long weekend touring with the Australian Bushrangers Orienteering team in a set of Test Match races against the NZ national team.

Friday's race was in and around the Auckland zoo. I ran well (especially in the complex zoo terrain) and finished 7th (out of 30) despite a small mistake at the third last control. Saturday morning was a middle distance race in steep, muddy, farmland. A good solid run, without expending too much energy for the upcoming test matches, I finished first of the bushrangers, about 5mins down on the winner.

The first test was the Massey University sprint. Many controls were above or below uncrossable walls and the challenge was to approach these from the correct side. Speed was crucial, and although I finished



only 90 seconds behind the winner, I was several places down. Sunday morning was a World Ranking middle distance race. This was my best run of the weekend. I ran 28 minutes for about 4km in complex, tough sand dunes, only 15 seconds behind Eric Morris and 1 minute behind Rob Preston (the top Aussie).

The afternoon was a chasing start, and I caught Eric by the first control. Before long a pack of about 8 runners were together, fighting hard for 3rd place. I almost fell off, but just managed to hang on and catch the pack again in the low visibility young pines, and stay with the pack until the end for a good finish. Monday was the long distance World Ranking Event. Visibility was very low, and the contours were extremely steep. I thought the contour interval was almost 10m! I ran ok for the most part, but got totally confused by one control and made a parallel error in the most complex part of the map, losing around 8 minutes. My result therefore was disappointing, but I learnt a lot and can take away a few useful lessons about orienteering in low visibility terrain.

MFR team flies in the Flinders

A select team of Melbourne Forest Racer's made the long trip to the Flinders Rangers for the 'Queens Birthday Outback Orienteering Carnival'.

I was joined by Rob Lewis, making a mark in his first year of M40, and new-comer to the sport of orienteering, Kerry White, who recently stepped up from the 'nuff nuff' girlfriend's class (her label) to the challenges of W35.

The 3 day event was held near Wilpena Pound in the heart of the rugged Flinders, 450 km north of Adelaide. I spent many a day in the Flinders Ranges before coming to Melbourne and taking up orienteering for the first time so it was a delight to rediscover the area in a new way. The terrain offered complex systems of dry creeks broken up by many small knolls – and the odd steep hill - in beautiful native Callitris pine forest: a delight to run through! With excellent visibility and little undergrowth the km rates were very fast: sub 5min/km. I even managed under 6min/ km! With Golden Orb spiders at every turn we were constantly removing web from our faces... and the odd spider hitching a ride!

Rob sensibly undertook the warm up event on the Wilpena Creek Map on the Saturday at a slow pace, even carrying his camera around to take some snaps. Knowing only one speed – flat knackers – I went around in 36 minutes and declared afterwards that if I never did another race again I'd be happy having just finished my first navigationally flawless race. Better was to come!

Kerry is into getting her money's worth and did so in superb style spending 110 minutes out on the 5.7km course.

Contol Flag, Pugilist Hill with Wilpena Pound in the Background



The main event for the weekend was the revisit to the area used for the 2002 national championships for a Badge and SA OY event. The 'Pugilist Hill' map had a more complex channel network than the day before so it was easy to pick the wrong channel to navigate on. Wilpena Pound, the Elder Range and Pugilist Hill made for stunning backdrops and provided an additional navigational aid on the longer legs – a fixed and visible point on the horizon – that's not often available in Victoria.

“ Wilpena Pound, the Elder Range and Pugilist Hill made for stunning backdrops ”

I ran a confident race covering the 14.4km M21 elite course in 88 minutes in 3rd place, 14 minutes behind Simon Upill. Rob won the M40 course (9.3km) in convincing style in 59 minutes, 8 minutes ahead of second place. Kerry had another big day out thanks to a couple of blowouts but she enjoyed the beautiful countryside more than anyone else on the day spending 2 hours and 27 minutes out on her course!

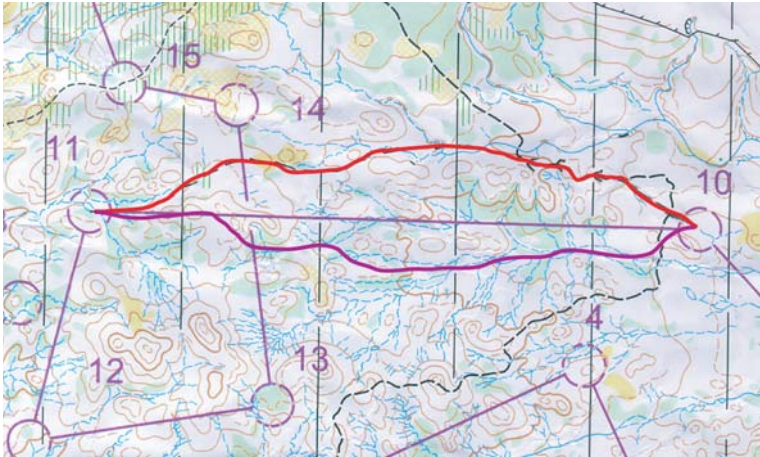
The final event of the carnival was the SA middle distance championships on the Wilpena Spurs map. Runnability was once again good with very little undergrowth able to pierce the loose stony ground. Rob and I placed in the top ten in the men's race – 7th and 4th respectively. It took Kerry 22 minutes looking for the first control only to discover she had the wrong clue description sheet. Despite this she came in third on her course less than 10minutes behind second place.

This race rounded off a brilliant weekend's racing in unique and unforgettable terrain. We all agreed we'd be back again!

Dion Keech

(see Dion & Rob's Leg comparison next page)

Rob & Dion split by the spur



The Pugilist Hill Map

Rob (course 3 - red route)/ Dion (course 1 - purple route)

On Sunday's long race Rob and I shared a number of common legs. The one pictured here (my control 10 to 11) was the longest and the only leg where we took a significantly different route.

Rob 6min 36sec:

"I chose the handrail all the way – the track to start, the creek, the spur with a clearing and then another creek which gave me a safe entry route into the control".

Dion 7min 02sec:

"I was flagging at this point in the race with my customary mid-course second wind yet to kick in. I was drawn to the main drainage gully seeing it as the straightest line to the control. I was careful not to be drawn into any of the feeders from the NW and looked carefully for the 4 knolls in a row to my right. I then climbed to the top of the long hill which directed me down the spur to the control. I think the complexity of the creeks caused me to pause often which is reflected in the difference between my time and Rob's."

Rob and I with Wilpena Pound in the Background



AJ wins world ranking event

Hi everybody, and welcome to my first race report from sunny Finland. In last weekends MTBO World Ranking Races I managed 8th and a very pleasing 1st place.

Having flown into Europe on Thursday, I was going to play the weekends World Ranking Events (WRE) by ear and race depending on how I overcame the long flights and time differences. Fortunately we were able to stay with Jussi Mäkilä and Nina Phillips (both top MTBO'ers) in Tampere on the first evening, which made settling in much less stressful (thanks guys!).

Friday then saw us drive north to Jäläsjarvi (where Jalas shoes come from) for a easy ride on a model map to get back into Orienteering mode and test the legs.

Saturdays Middle distance race started very late, I didn't start till after 6pm! But that's all good in Finland at this time of year, it's not dark till almost midnight, and even then it only like twilight till dawn. My race was good until I had one of those moments and took a track thinking it was the one I had come down earlier. It wasn't of course, and I ended up having to cut through the forest for a while to get back on course, losing about 3 min in the process. That was enough to put me back into 8th position on the day. Not a horrible start, but I was looking to improve the next day.

Sunday's Long distance race was on the same and an adjacent map as the day before. The terrain was typically Finnish in that it was very rough (CABC was good preparation for those who know what that's like), but very unlike Finland in that there was a rather sparse track network, which made route choice very critical.

Fortunately for me I was feeling good again on Sunday, and was able to push hard for the entire race. I again made a stupid mistake which cost me ~2min, as well as a few smaller wobbles, but amazingly at the end of the day had the fastest time!

What was pleasing is that looking at the splits I was riding as fast as anybody else, and it was just lucky that everybody made at least one small error so that I could scrape in with the win.

The World Ranking List has now been updated, <http://www.michigigon.at/2006/wre2006results.htm>, and I have moved up one place to be ranked 2nd in the world. It's all very close, and with a good World Champs I may be able to reach #1 again.

This next week sees more training in Finland, before I run in Forssa Games and Jukola (yes I still do run!) which I am looking forward to enormously.

Till next time, Adrian

MFR NEWS

Rookie wins Turkey Traverse

Melbourne Forest Racers organised the inaugural Turkey Traverse orienteering race over a series of three bush and park maps in Melbourne's inner suburbs.

With Victoria's elites racing in Orange, and Bruce Arthur course setting, the 12km course was contested by an evenly matched field of juniors and veterans. In a mass start, the pack took a longer route choice, with Paul Liggins going on his own and taking an early lead. He was then caught by the pack at 3, and there were 6 leaders running together through to the end of the first map.

Adam Scammell came to the front and led briefly at the Chandler Highway bridge at just under half distance. However with the most physical and technically demanding forest to come, he was always going to find it hard to hold on. Juniors Bryan and Leon Keely were looking good but would be tested in the second half by the experienced Warren Key, Jim Russell and Paul Liggins.

Liggins hit the front with 2km to go, but a poor route choice brought him back to the pack. Five were left together for the last kilometre. Everyone hesitated at the base of the large quarry for around 15 seconds. No one wanted to commit to going left, right or straight up the cliff. Eventually Key chose wisely and headed left and took a small lead.

Key, Russell and the Keely brothers all punched together at the last control, but Bryan won the sprint to take out the race.

Rosie goes cross country

I decided to try out for the school cross country team. We had to train at Johnstone Park on Monday and Thursday mornings before school at 8.20am for about six weeks.

We then had the school trial and the first

eight in each age group were selected to go and represent the school at the district cross country competition. I was selected in the under 10 girls. It was the first time I had competed for the school so I was a little bit excited.

On the day we had to catch a bus. Our school was the first to arrive, so we put our tarpaulins down and waited for the other schools to arrive. The under 10 boys ran first and then it was our turn.

It was a nice sunny day and the ground was muddy in spots. The course was 2 km long. We had to run up a hill just after the start. I did run most of the way. When the race was over I was tired and felt a bit sick.

We then got to cheer the other age groups before going back to school. I hope I can make the team again next year as it was lots of fun.

Blair wins winter classic

Sunday's Badge event was a new Albury Wodonga map on steep spur gully terrain at Mt Terrible.

With no elite men able to make the trip from ACT or NSW, the race was left to a battle between Blair Trewin, Bruce Arthur and Paul Liggins. Despite all runners recording times within 90 seconds of each other, the race was virtually decided in the first 3 minutes. An interesting mapping interpretation and control placement saw Arthur and Liggins both navigate to a control on a similar feature nearby. Liggins mispunched, Arthur checked the code and found the correct control in 90 seconds, while Trewin punched correctly and the lead never changed thereafter. Liggins posted the fastest time, but was disqualified, while Trewin edged out Arthur by 1 minute.

In W21A, Kirsten Fairfax (59mins) had a huge win over Briohny Davey (81) and Ilka Barr (85).

The best terrain of the weekend was left

till Monday for the 2006 Winter Classic. It was a return to Barambogie South and the steep granite hillsides of the 2003 Australian Long Distance Championships.

Arthur started well and had picked up 3 minutes on Trewin in the first 40 minutes with some good route choices through the tough and technical terrain. These two stayed together for much of the next half an hour, but then Arthur tried to pull away with a different route choice. This decision backfired with Arthur losing 5 minutes at the end of the leg on a complex granite hillside. Trewin pushed on strongly to win in 94 minutes, with Arthur (98) and Liggins (102) tiring in the last 15 minutes of a very physical course.

Trewin heads to Finland today to prepare for the Forssa Phone Games and Jukola relay next weekend.

Blair showing his form in the Nuggets Uniform



Aaron's Gold Medal

Continuing a recent run of success by MFR members in related sports, MFR member Aaron Dodd gained a gold medal at the Victorian police and Emergency Services Games Triathlon.

The event held in chilly conditions at Geelong on May 4th saw Aaron take an early lead in the swim, never looking threatened by the other competitors, comfortably finishing in a time of 39.05 for the dash distance course. Aaron was happy with his time, beating his target of 40 minutes, and is looking forward to competing over the longer distance next year.

Aaron & Sophie with their home-cooked MFR ginger bread man



Nuggets 185th at Jukola

There was a substantial Australian contingent at the Jukola relay, one of the two big relays of the Scandinavian orienteering year, in Finland on the third weekend in June.

It is a huge orienteering event - about 1400 teams of 7 men, and 850 of 4 women. Somewhat more to my surprise, it is also one of the big events of the general Finnish sporting year - I visited some people at the Finnish Meteorological Institute (none of whom are orienteers) on the following Monday morning. The results were coming up as casually in conversation as the weekend's football would in an Australian workplace, and I could say that I ran 77 for leg 6 and it was as immediately meaningful to most as it would be if someone said they'd got 12 possessions for Hawthorn against Richmond last weekend.

In addition to the usual collection of Australians running for Scandinavian clubs, there was also a 'Victorian Nuggets' team. This wasn't quite as much of a Nuggets team as we planned on - the original contingent would have had six out of seven, but we entered five out of seven, and then when we lost Chris Naunton through injury on the day before the event, we brought New Zealander Alistair Landels in as a replacement.

The target for the Nuggets team was a top 200 placing. We made a good start when Adrian Jackson went through the first TV control in 130th - passing 600 people in 2.2km from his unseeded start position is no mean feat! We went backwards by the end of the first leg, but hovered about the 200 mark for a lot of the time, with Ian Meyer (leg 2) and Alex Randall (leg 4) having particularly good runs. Alistair took over on the last leg in 216th. He's not as fit as he was when he won a World Cup race in 1994, but he was still the best of our team, and ended up bringing us home in 185th position.

MFRunning to the sun

The cream of MFR's young talent has headed off in a mass exodus to the sunshine and elite races of the northern hemisphere.

Only the slow, weak and impoverished have remained behind to do battle with the fearsome Melbourne cold. Those in overseas action include:

Blair Trewin - travelling on a Bureau of Meteorology scholarship - amongst other things running Jukola, World Masters, Fin 5 and World Champs public races.

Adrian Jackson, Carolyn Jackson and Alex Randall - focussing on the World MTBO champs in Finland

Jasmine Neve - various events including JWOC

Sue Key - World Masters, and World Champs coach extraordinaire

Fergus Fitzwater - visiting Finland and southern France

Paul Liggins - World Masters, Fin 5 and World Champs public races, plus Tour de France

Speaking on behalf of the aged and slow runners, President Bruce Arthur noted that many of them were unlikely to survive the winter. "Membership fees may need to rise in 2007 to cover the lost revenue from those who freeze to death this year while on early morning training runs".

Donations of blankets, warm clothing and children's toys may be left with the equipment officer. AAP

Liggo in training for the world masters



Easter 2006

Melbourne Forest Racers recorded some excellent results on 'home turf' at the recent Easter Carnival.

Our star import from Denmark, Rune Olsen (pictured) came 4th in the Men's Elite division, followed in 5th place by Warren Key (competing 3 divisions above his age). Club President Bruce Arthur had a top ten finish coming in 9th place.

The Neve family dominated the results board again this year with Sue winning W50A, Todd 2nd in M14A, Morten 7th in

M20E and Jasmine 8th in the Women's Elite. Nicola Dalheim confirmed her status as the best women's 40 orienteer with another first place.

In Australian Middle Champs the Neve family did well again: Todd, Max and Sue all came 1st in their classes. Aaron Dodd recorded a 1st in M21A while Adrian was the best of our elites coming 4th in M21E – not bad for a biker! Other firsts were Anna Scarbek in W21A and Nicola in W40

(clockwise from top left): Nicola dashing towards a 5 minute mistake on the first control of the sprint; a seamless handover between Suse & Kerry in the sprint; MFR pin up star; Sue in the finish chute, day 3



Hinchinbrook highlights

Margaret and Susannah King joined 6 of Margaret's bushwalking clubmates for a 4 day hike on Hinchinbrook Island in North Qld, in late May.

Original plan had been to do the hike in April, but luckily someone had an inkling that may have been too close to the cyclone season....as it was...and changed it till May. The reason for bananas being \$4 each was clear on the bus trip down from Cairns to Hinchinbrook, as we passed through the Cyclone Larry devastation zone - damage everywhere, Bunnings all around would have sold out of tarps, and builders will have work for years to come.

After a night in Cardwell we went across to the island and hiked for 4 days down the east side of the island. Ever changing landscape of rainforest, heathland, beach walking, swamps, creek crossings, more swamps, more creek crossings, more creek



crossings, and finally a long beach walk with...another creek crossing. The summer's rain still hadn't stopped, it rained most nights, so the creeks were fast flowing, deep, and with slippery rocks underneath. Some of them became a mammoth effort to cross, up to waist deep and 60m or so wide. Great views along the way, insert pic labelled Strobach. Highly recommended for hikers who like a challenge - the toughest hike I done that I've enjoyed (as opposed to the ones I didn't enjoy at the time, like Outward Bound!)

Our reward for completing the hike was 4 days of luxury cruising on the Great Barrier Reef, including lots of snorkelling, a visit to Lizard island, and taking the plunge finally and trying scuba diving. And those great tropical sunsets.



MFR suckers run PBs

MFR suckers Dion, Kirsten, Kieth, Suse, Rob and Anna were amongst 9500 suckers lured by over-inflated advertising to compete in "Run to the G" on Sunday 18th June. Contrary to its name, this run is no longer "to the G" but a "Run around the MCG Park", from Federation Square around Melbourne's inner city sporting precincts and back to Fed square. No longer do you get to finish with a lap of the hallowed turf, or sneak the footy in for a shot at goal after crossing the finish line. Veteran of the inaugural event back in the 1990s, Suse, further embarrassed herself by talking up the event to her colleague Jo, recently arrived from London and a massive cricket fan as well as keen runner, promising the opportunity to touch the turf itself, only to have to fess up that it's now all a big con. Furthermore, the charity fundraiser aspect of the event is a DIY affair - you raise the funds for cancer research by getting sponsors, while the event organisers pocket the profits from your \$30 entry fee. With the event atmosphere rivalling some of orienteering's less well planned state series events (read, finish chute 100m down a tiny track from where anyone is hanging out), one wonders who will come back again next year to break the entry record again- the PA was so low in volume that you had no idea when the start was happening unless you were in the front wave;- a finish chute less than 100m long on the edge of Princes Bridge with room for about 50 spectators, and after you've just run up a steep hill! In fact the show bag collection area was bigger than the finish area!

On a brighter note, Monday night run training is paying off for some - Anna ran 48minutes in her debut 10km, Dion was disappointed not to crack the 40 minute barrier, but pleased make the top 100 (95th) and to thrash Rob who did 41min. Kirsten was just outside the top 10 women, while Suse in her comeback 10km (first one in 6 years) was relieved to avoid the embarrassment of taking over the hour, sneaking in at 59.41. Kieth was the surprise packet of the day, breaking 40 minutes (by less than a second!)... he had us all fooled running at the back of the pack on Monday nights!

Get set for the Olympic Dream in November, but watch out for Rob tripping Dion up in an attempt to regain the upper hand in the ongoing battle for supremacy.

RunO returns to Denmark

MFR's star Danish Import Rune Olsen has returned home after two years in the club which produced some great results and even better friendships. here's what he had to say about his time in Australia:

My biggest Biggest moments downunder:

All the possibilities for good orienteering in Australia and different types of terrain TAS (Sand dunes, marshy terrain), VIC (goldmining-granite), (NSW open granite and open farmland) ACT challenging navigation) WA... NT....SA...

Monday night runs from Clifton hills and Dions gourmet shit for dinner!

AUS Champ in Tasmania, awesome place, great running great sceneries (had an awesome road trip with Robert Molnar.) And of course my AUS Championship in the Sprint. It's always a pleasure to beat the Australians on home ground!

Was a really good feeling doing a good 'technical' race at Eppalock and see the difference after 22 month in Australia. Orienteering it's all about experience and your mind!

Drinking the last Protein shake just before Liggo and see him cry....

Best of all... hanging around with all those great people, especially orienteers, always ready to help and give good advise.

Crashing at IKEA and stashing up on all the good stuff!
The Belgian Beef Cafe monthly Breakfast

Damn I have many good experiences from OZ

Worst moments:

VIC relay Eppalock. 10 min lead to Nimbilus Emus with Warren, Smashed Compass on the way to second control got lost and had to ask an old lady for which way north was. Punched one control twice and DNF! It's not getting much better than that.

Trying to get a normal sandwich in an outback town in NSW....This is a sandwich bar we fry everything!

Get beaten by fellow MFR adventures in Adventure races :-)

Experience that Liggo have finished of the last Hot Choco, bread and banana, when all you need is A hot choco and a Nutella Banana sandwich after a 3 hour run in cold winter rain, after jumping over several snakes! (I know Liggo must be in trouble without me around, not sure how he get any food at all....maybe he have located the supermarket by now!)



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