

**Team “Adventuregear.com.au” take out line honours down at Sawtell in the 48hrs Adventure Race Geoquest 2007 “Australia’s Premier Adventure Race”**

**Race Report by Kim Beckinsale - the “KEEN CBD” connection**



Just in case you didn't know Adventure Racings Premier category is usually mixed. This means that usually three guys and a girl team up and navigate their way through challenging course of Kayaking, Mountain biking and Trekking! So as you may have guessed I was girl and I teamed up with John Jacobi (one of Australia's best AV racers and the brainchild of Rapid Ascent who put on the Anaconda series and the Keen Adventure Race) Guy Andrews (Australian Surf Ironman Legend and Leading Adventure racer) and all-rounder Sam Maffett (from the Rapid Ascent Team that John has hand picked to design some of the most challenging courses around).

Now adventure racing is not just about survival of the fittest and toughest it's also all about team work and planning organisation. Our preparation was not as easy as it is for some given two of the team were from Victoria and two from Queensland. But thanks to numerous emails back and forth we managed to all get there to Sawtell. We passed gear checks and competency checks with flying colours and I got my first taste of paddling a RED 7 Double Ski and also the opportunity to paddle with JJ – I was very very comfortable with that which was a huge boost to my confidence for the ocean paddle which was set to start the race.

Mapping and course route selection takes up most of our time prior to the start of the race. (This all takes place the evening before the race) Once the maps are issued at rego its all eyes on the map and the team goes to work. JJ and Guy plot the coordinates – Sam and I read details and write notes for the team – this is the business end of the race. Sam was particularly organised and on top of everything – this included briefing the support crew of their role

during the race. Our support Crew David and Alan and support Chef Gloria (Guys mum) were always in the right place at the right time and this was a huge boost to our team. (We would not have been so successful without them)

Race day arrives and threats of cancelling the paddle due to extreme weather conditions that flooded many parts of the Central NSW coast failed to dampen the start of Geoquest. We all made our way to the beach at Sawtell and pondered what we had in store for us. It was cold and wet and windy, the Geo Half competitors got hammered on the waves on their start prior to ours – but ours was seamless! JJ and Guy on front of the Red 7's with Sam and me sitting behind just ploughed throughout the waves and opened up a huge lead on the entire field. JJ found and caught the biggest swells possible – I was paddling my little arms off but somehow managed to keep in time (well mostly).

We hit TA one and y made an exit down the beach on foot in ride and tie style. So while three ran one rode the bike dumped it for the person at the back. We got a great rhythm going found the CP on the headland then snapped the chain on the bike just near the end of the leg. But the TA was close by so we were soon again paddling but this time up stream to a park where our support crew met us with our bikes.



So off we set on our MTB's out a paddock along a train line then we started a climb! It was wet slippery and mostly unrideable – so the hike a bike had returned to haunt us from Geo last year – but lucky this time there was a

track. Guy managed to break and his chain, repair it and get back on the bike. Meanwhile JJ was showing his supreme strength pushing two bikes (his and mine – the light **GIANT ANTHEM** thanks to Anthony from **CBD Cycles Melbourne**) up the hill. So this allowed me to keep up and stay in touch with JJ as he powered up the hill. We were still in front but once we started the Trek we found out that Team Mountain Designs had slipped by us on route to the first Trek CP. They stumbled on as track which led them in the right direction while we were left bush bashing through thick scrub (lost of lantana and wait a while) but that is what adventure racing is all about – lost of planning but a bit of luck here and there does not go astray. We did not get in front of MD's and at the end of the trek found that Team XTerrain was closing in on us. As it was getting dark we were riding down steep rocky descents, the guys hammered and I peddled cautiously – being a light weight makes it pretty impossible to generate the speed that the guys can anyway – and sometimes I don't think that's such a bad thing. We met our support crew and they drove us and our bikes back to the campsite ready for the next leg – our transitions were lightning fast and this was in our favour.

We had a feed of Gloria's fine foods - things like hot potatoes risotto chicken strips and warm soup – while we had a compulsory 50minutes in the TA. This time flew as we were also required to organise gear for a bike gear drop that we would then have to carry everything from that point on.

Warm and kitted out for a 14k trek off we set out of the TA. But the only problem we had a cold stream to cross and we were dry and warm. So off come the clothes and into a dry bag as we all waded in the raw with arms up high. We quickly start to get our gear back on only to hear JJ call out “ come on guys stop powdering your noses” – JJ was dressing and running at the same time..... Mmmm I can't say that that had been a part of my training routine! So Sam Guy and I eventually caught up and off we set down the beautiful beach listening to the crashing sound of the waves – the starts were out and it was a beautiful night. JJ carried my pack here as I was a little off the pace (mmmmm I ate too much food in the TA and it was not settling too well) Some good navigation by JJ and Sam saw us off the beach and running along a network of trails behind the dunes until we reached the TA where our bikes had been dropped. We found out we were 30mins down on Mountain Designs so we had to dig deep and go up a gear!!!!

We headed straight for the split trek – it was a road ride mostly and when we arrived MD's were still in front. Sam and I went for CP X and Y and JJ and Guy went for W and Z. Sam and I managed to locate the CP's without delay ( Thanks to Sam's fine Nav ) then we saw Xterrain on their way out as we were heading back – the gossip was that MD's were not back yet. We sprinted back – JJ and Guy were back too – and this meant we were ahead once again. So we hit the Bike Rogaine with a good lead. Now I am not exactly sure how it happened but Xterrain somehow caught us on this leg – think the route they selected was faster and we did have a few corrections to make (those ones when you just fly down a big hill and then the navigator says – we missed it we have to go back up – Mmmm not really all that fun!!!!) Nonetheless we were still in with a chance and we managed to get a break on Xterrain and get into the TA 4 minutes ahead for the 7k Paddle to the campsite. So another quick transition and we set off in the RED 7s

downstream. JJ paddles without jocks because he doesn't want them to get wet!!!! I think he must enjoy getting his gear off??????

We have another stop at the campsite – but only 20 minutes – barely time to dry off and change. We jump in the cars loaded up with plates of food from Gloria's kitchen and head out to Thora – a little town at the foot of a massive range which we were about to ride up. We had a 4 minute lead still so once we are allowed to set off – off we go – Sam and I hear a loud Holla from JJ – his chain has broken – that's broken chain number 3. But this does not faze us we set out strong once it's fixed just seconds ahead of Xterrain. They pass us before we hit the hill and we struggle to stick to their lights – they are out of sight. So as we start climbing JJ starts encouraging us all to dig deep. He tows me up the steep climbs and sets a cracking pace. He sights lights ahead and yells out – come on and we all left a gear – JJ continues to tow me and I crank up the hills in middle ring (Granny Gear had a spack attack and wasn't working). Soon I am totally stuffed I jump off the bike and manually shift into Granny gear and leave it there – Mmmm not so fast on the descents – but I could climb. Soon we catch Xterrain and get in front they pass us again and then we get in front t again – after 36 hours we are still racing for the lead. Xterrain stop suddenly and we motor past and don't look back – we al realise know we have a chance with less than 10k to go on the bike and our strongest disciplines as a team to go – a Kayak and Run!



We get into TA and into the kayaks – there is no time to eat or stuff around – we just paddle paddle paddle! We look behind – no one is in sight but we keep the pace up!!!! The 19k paddle into the sun is harsh – JJ sets a cracking cadence for me to follow and this is probably helping me to keep awake – oh and the occasional splash of water helps to keep me alert. We find the CP in a tidal pool – JJ has to look long and hard as a cow has attempted to eat it for brekkie!!! We reach the end of the paddle and waste no time despite Xterrain are not in sight. Our support crew have everything all ready to go – my **Keen**

shoes, socks, hat and within second it seems we are off and running on the final leg of the race and we are in the lead!!!!



We are Team AdventureGear.com.au and we have one CP to go as we run 11k along the beach toward the finish. We are quick to locate the prominent rock and Sam punches the CP – we can see behind and no one is in sight. We relax and chat all the way to the finish and enjoy the lead we have developed and ponder moment. It's a long slow run after you have been out for almost 28hrs – but we find the energy to wade the final stream to the campsite – hug or support crew and supports as we make our way to the finish of Geaquest 2007. We raise our arms as we cross the finish line, we smile and embrace each other – we achieved the ultimate success – it was our moment!!!!!!

