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Suckers for punishment

BY BEN HARRIS

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ORIENTEERING

Call them crazy, call them adventurous, call them persistent, call them courageous. Whatever you call Adam Mort, John Harris, Garry Byrne and Phil van Gent, their achievement last weekend can only be described as incredible.

The four Mudgee athletes took part in a 48-hour non-stop endurance race called GeoQuest.

They paddled, ran and cycled their way on water, through dense bush land and tough terrain, all with very little sleep.

Bodies are battered, cut and bruised, bones are broken, while your brain is telling you to stop and rest.

It is arguably the ultimate physical and mental test for someone to go through.

Adam Mort, who has done dozens of half-ironman and Ironman races, said the GeoQest 48-hour adventure race was by far the toughest and gruelling event he has done.

"It was unreal. It's not something I have done before but I thought I would give it a crack," Mort said.

"It was a great experience.

"In Ironman, it is full on for a short period of time. This [GeoQuest race] is more punishing on your body because you just keep going for 48 hours.

"You have to push your body and mind like never before and do it all with hardly any sleep."

Mort said no one in his team slept for more than two hours throughout the 48 hours.

"Sleep deprivation was the big part for me," Mort said.

"You would have a sleep for 20 minutes then get up and go again.

"You had to keep talking to each other because you would doze off on the bike or on the run.

"It's all part of it."

Fittingly the Mudgee quartet named their team Rusty Ironmen.

They were 10th across the finish line but finished 15th overall because they received heavy time penalties for not passing certain checkpoints.

The checkpoints were hidden and teams had to navigate their way to each checkpoint.

They could decide to miss a checkpoint and keep going but they would receive penalties.

"There was an all-female team that we beat home but they finished higher than us overall because they went to all of their checkpoints," Mort said.

Fifty teams entered - 27 in the full 48-hour race and 23 in the 24-hour - but only 16 teams in the full finished and 13 in the half.

Byrne said competitors who have done the adventure race before said this year's version at Forster was the toughest yet.

Some of the disciplines competitors had to complete were trekking, mountain biking, sea kayaking and roping.

Teammates must stay together for the whole time and all four must cross the finish line to be get an official result.