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## GeoQuest 2013

by [Liam](#) on [JUNE 13, 2013](#) in [RACE REPORT](#)

Just a quick report from GeoQuest on the weekend. The team met our goals, racing to fourth place overall (and first mens team) in a time of 31hrs 27min. On a personal level, I struggled with my health, both in the lead up and in the race itself, and I was a definite anchor on the team. It's never fun slowing up the team and not being able to contribute fully, and it makes me wonder what we could have done if I was in good form, but the team rallied together for a very satisfying race none-the-less.


Just a couple of highlights (and other-lights!) from the race below, but before that, if you want to play along, race maps can be found [here](#) and a more extensive collection of photos can be found [here](#).

- Firstly: our support crew. A unique feature of GeoQuest is the incorporation of support crew, who are effectively the 5th, 6th and 7th team members and can make a massive difference to how your race unfolds. Thanks Franky, Michelle and Brett for an awesome job. How lucky we were to have a previous Geo winner as support crew!



Lucas and Slosky dialling in the bikes pre-race on the Harrington Breakwall

- On paper, the course looked a little shorter this year with the standard amount of trekking but less biking and paddling. Still, there were over 6000 vertical meters between us and the finish line and we were in for a challenge.
- Race day morning and we all agreed that we would take it easy at the start with a long race ahead of us. The starting siren goes, and inevitably we are instantly into a sub 4 min/km sprint from the lighthouse down to the boats.



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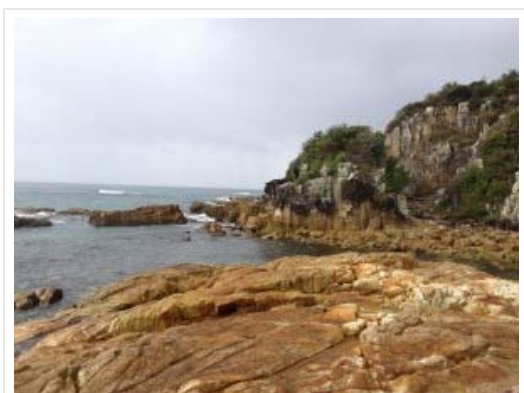
GeoQuest start line at the lighthouse at Crowdy Head.

- After 5 previous GeoQuests, this is the first year I would be using skis as opposed to sea kayaks. With Slosky and Lucas on the team (both representative outrigger paddlers with multiple Molokai Crossings under the belt) we were always going to be a strong paddling team. Off the beach and we were with the four teams that would eventually form the top 4 in the final results. Once we hit the swell we worked our way to the front with clear water in front of us.



Launching boats from the beach at Crowdy Head

- I was just starting to get comfortable in the ski and enjoy the down wind conditions when a 1.5m shark pulled up and started swimming beside us. If I needed any extra incentive to stay in the boat, that was it (a number of friends on other teams capsized that day). We eventually finished the 1km run / 16km paddle first in 1:28 with a 2 minute lead over Macpac.
- Into the first run leg and we were quickly reeled in by Macpac on the first climb. Straight off I could tell I was in for a tough day with my heart rate maxing out even on the easiest of jogs. I was able to keep my head on the nav, but I knew that I was missing out on some beautiful scenery and that I wasn't being the happiest of team mates. We were also passed by Outer Limits and MDs on this leg, but were to see them again later on in the race (as opposed to Macpac who put daylight between themselves and the rest of the field).



Diamond Head coastline.

- Leg 3 was a much slower paddle, working against the tide and slogging through the shallows to the CPs. MDs took the portage option ahead of us, but didn't seem to gain or lose any time.



The start of the third leg down Camden Haven Inlet.

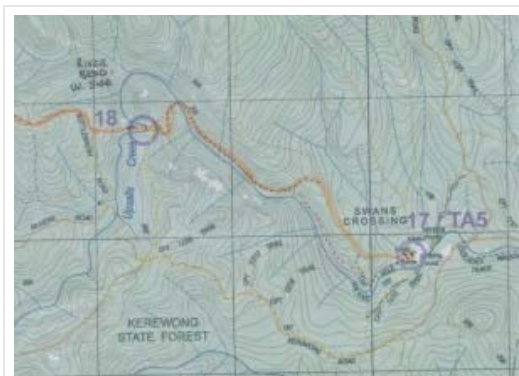
- Leg 4 was a trek rogaine which we did anticlockwise (D-E-F-G-H-J-L-M). CP F was a highlight approaching from below via a beautiful waterfall. Our plan to traverse across to G from the south backfired when the vegetation was too thick and we had to climb all the way up and around via the trail. It got dark just after CP H.



Leg 4 Trek Rogaine.

- Leg 5 was an uneventful ride where Slosky took over the nav. CP 12 gave us a little trouble hidden in a tricky bit of lantana. On the descent to the TA we saw Outer Limits trekking out, after apparently returning to HQ after almost an hour to try a different route to CP 18.
- We stuck to our original plan of taking the walking track to CP18 on Leg 6. We instantly lucked out, with the trail staying down low next to Upsalls Creek, instead of climbing high up onto the adjacent ridgeline as drawn on the map. However at the point where we were originally supposed to join the walking track from the ridgeline track, the path petered out and disappeared. All we were left with were little pink dots painted on intermittent trees. We would scramble for a minute then have to spread out to find the next pink dot. It looked like we were also the first team through on this route. Slow going, but we eventually found the point where the "track" crossed the river. From this point the pink dots disappeared

completely, so from there it was just a matter of taking a bearing straight to the CP via the saddle, which we nailed. Although it would have been a beautiful hike in the daylight, and it was the shortest and flattest route to the CP, it was slow going. In hindsight, any teams going out and around via the main road would have been quicker.



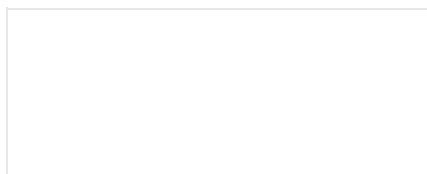
CP18 route options (our route in red; alternative route in yellow).

- On the climb out of CP 18 I had a power spew, and immediately set about eating and drinking again to get the fuel back in that I'd just lost. Not an easy job on a tender stomach.
- Trekking out from Leg 6 at dawn, we had a team catch up to us quickly from behind on the road hike out. My heart fell thinking it was a chasing all mens team, as I knew I was holding the pace up on the road at that point, which we should have been running. However the team behind us turned out to be MDs. Unknown to us, we had passed them before CP18 and moved into third place. We ran into the TA together, swapping stories from the night's adventures.



Trekking out of Leg 6 at dawn.

- The Leg 7 bike stage was a race highlight. Beautiful riding with bombing descents from 600m to 300m altitude, followed by long climbs. Every time Leo would check in with Sloschy on how far up we had to go again, the answer always seemed to be "300m". All the climbing was rewarded with some great views, particularly from Flat Rock Lookout.





In transition before the Stage 7 bike leg.

- Legs 8, 9 and 10 saw us split rogaine, bike and paddle to the finish line. We could never quite re-close the gap to team Mountain Designs, despite catching them a couple of times (mostly due to my speed or lack there of), finishing 22 minutes behind them.



The final paddle to home.

- It was great to finish the race in daylight – a long term goal of mine. We were done by 3:30pm with enough time to clean up, have a feed and catch 11 hours of sleep before heading off on the long drive back to QLD.



The Finish.

In the end the final top 4 was an identical repeat with the same navigators finishing in those positions in 2012. Interestingly, 4 of the top 10 teams were all male teams (compared to 2009 where we won the mens division but only placed 13th overall). Again, I was reminded of the importance of good team mates in this sport who helped



take the lead and towed/carried while I tried to hang on and just keep moving forward.

So now for a bit of time off to get healthy again, before some great racing in the second half of this year in QLD (the Culminator 8hr, iAdventure 8hr, Hells Bells 24hr and Darkside 18hr) before travelling to the X-Marathon 24hr in Victoria in December. All of this is with an eye towards Godzone in 2014, and we'll begin a bit of a sponsorship push in the second half of the year.

Finally, keep an eye out for some exciting news regarding a new Rogue event this year – details to follow soon!



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**Ben Cirulis** June 13, 2013 at 4:30 pm #

Great report Liam, and awesome effort Rogue.

I got lots of pics of you guys while supporting the BMX Bandits, online here:

<http://www.fotografija.com.au/gallery/Mountain-Designs-GeoQuest-2013/G0000v6Xbc.24WqY/>

Cheers,  
Ben

REPLY



**liam** June 14, 2013 at 8:24 am #

Thanks Ben – there are some great shots there. Looks like the BMX Bandits had another good race. Are they racing XPD this year?

REPLY



**Ben** June 14, 2013 at 8:27 pm #

Cheers Liam.

Dave has a mini-Bandit on the way, so no XPD plans this time round. We are now talking Godzone 2014 instead though.

REPLY



**liam** June 17, 2013 at 9:22 am #

Awesome. We are racing Godzone 2014 as well. The organisers put on a great race, and you can't be the terrain.

REPLY



**webadmin** June 14, 2013 at 1:52 pm #

Nice work mate, good write up.

-Mike

REPLY

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