

Mountain Bike Miles at Stromlo

Rocky Trail Entertainment summoned beginner racers and elite MTB competitors, as well as cycling friends and families to take part in the inaugural Real Bike Insurance MTB Cruise, held at Canberra's Mt Stromlo on March 6th.



The Event

The event had been designed to offer racing newbies an introduction to MTB racing while still providing seasoned pedal pushers with a challenging race day out on one of the most popular MTB tracks in Australia. About 300 MTB riders participated in the 5 distances on offer. Racing challenges ranged from 10, 30, 50 or 80 kilometres and stretched to include an invite only 100 mile category for the truly determined. Two racing loops had been mapped out to provide a quick 6.3km option for the eager beginner racers in 10 and 30km categories, as well as a longer, more challenging loop, that had regular endurance racers and weekend warriors explore more than 18km of the vast and popular MTB trail network at Mt Stromlo.



The trails of Mt Stromlo delivered a fun but challenging experience thanks to a muddy and slightly rainy start to the race day. Mud and dirt took their toll on some bikes early on, and whilst the event centre was pumping with one race start after the other, riders reported a strangely calm and eerie atmosphere around the course with mist hanging in the air.

Finally, mid-morning, the sun came out and shone on the holy MTB hill for the rest of the day. The MTB Cruise had a festive feel to it, and organisers Rocky Trail added to the family fun day atmosphere with face painting, colouring-in competitions and a mini-race for kids that were eager to take part in the day's activities.

The 100milers

Two Canberra mountain bike riders took out the men's and women's Real Bike Insurance MTB Cruise 100 mile category. In the men's category, **Brett Bellchambers** raced to victory on the 18.7km circuit with 8 laps in 8 hr 5 min (left, photo courtesy James Rankin / cycle-photos.com). Another local, **Ed Macdonald** claimed second place with 12 minutes behind, in front of third, **Wade Carberry** from Warila, NSW. Canberra-favourite, Shane Taylor, had mechanical problems in the first lap and was forced to withdraw after three.

Bec Parkes won the women's event in a time of 9 hr 29 min.

☞ Top: Brett Bellchambers, Photo courtesy James Rankin / cycle-photos.com

☞ Right: Bec Parkes, Photo courtesy James Rankin / cycle-photos.com



(cont.)



The Racers & Cruisers enjoyed a great day out at Mt Stromlo

Former 24 hours solo World Champion Craig Gordon from Wollongong was the favourite on the start line for the 80km event. Gordon fell victim to three flat tyres during the race and was overtaken by team mate, Shaun Lewis from Canberra.

Amazingly after nearly three and a half hours, it came down to a final sprint. Lewis sprinted for the line just beating Sydney's Peter Hatton by the width of a tyre. Lewis took the win, Hatton second and Gordon finished a creditable third.

Prita Jobling-Baker from Victoria won the women's 80 km event.

☞ *Right: Podium finishers 80km male open (l-r): Peter Hatton (2), Shaun Lewis (1), Craig Gordon (3)
Photo: Rocky Trail Entertainment*



With the 50km category holding the biggest field of racers, the numerous riders returning from their 10 and 30k first-time racing experiences mostly wore the glazed expressions of new addicts.



☞ *Top & Right: Future MTB Champions training up with Rocky Trail.
Photos: Rocky Trail Entertainment*

Give into your racing bug with Rocky Trail!

Rocky Trail Entertainment promise assistance with planning their riders' next hit of MTB adrenalin with upcoming events, like this year's MTB Grand Prix Series. With 4Hour and 8Hour solo and team racing options, the races kick off in July.

And after a well-received Real Bike Insurance MTB Cruise the guys from Rocky Trail are already standing in the starting blocks to bring the "cruisy ride" back in 2011.



For further information contact the event organiser:

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