

## First ever mountain bike race in Botanic Gardens

The first ever mountain bike race to be held in a Botanic Garden was held in Sydney's south west on the weekend. The newly constructed mountain bike trails at The Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan are now the closest trails to Sydney at just 45 minutes from the city centre.



The current 6.8 km of trail were christened by event organisers and MTB trail advocates Rocky Trail Entertainment with their SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix. The four and eight hour events on Saturday saw over 350 riders converge from all over New South Wales while Sunday's BANZAI Lifecycle MTB Fitness ride attracted over 150 local riders to a time trial-style event.

Star of the inaugural race was former world 24 hour champion, **Craig Gordon from Wollongong**, who claimed the fastest lap time of 20 min 38 sec. Gordon went on to lead the field in his two rider team with Rockstar Racing partner, **Troy Glennan (Taren Point)** amassing a remarkable 22 laps.

The 8 hour solo winner was **Blue Mountains' rider, David Ludenia**, with a respectable 20 laps completed.

For the 21 year old Specialized rider, the pace changed throughout the day as young rider Billy Sewell from Port Macquarie challenged his lead.

"I settled in through the middle of the race and got a bit complacent," admitted Ludenia. "I found I had to pick up the pace in the last two hours to keep my lead."

Ludenia was one of many riders impressed with the new mountain bike venue. The team from The Australian Botanic Garden, Mt Annan was praised by riders for "finally brining back" a MTB trail to Sydney and "letting us ride and race in such a beautiful setting of a Botanic Garden", as one rider put it. The many rangers on-site at the event assisting with race marshal and first aid duties, as well as director **Caz McCallum** herself giving the start signal to Rocky Trail's popular endurance race series, is a credit to the Botanic Garden's positive attitude towards mountain bikers and with increasing visitor numbers and a lot of riders already planning to make it their major training venue, the expansion plans for more trails seem very realistic.

"It was good track. Its popularity has already been demonstrated by the size and success of this event," Ludenia added.

Second in his first 8 hour endurance race was national under 19 champion, **Billy Sewell from Port Macquarie** registering 19 laps. Aaron Thomson from Canberra placed third on 18 laps.

Current world 24 hr champion for 30 – 34 women, **Belinda Porter (Port Macquarie)** claimed the 8 hour women's title.



*David Ludenia on track to win the SHIMANO MTB GP8 Hour Solo Elite race. Photo: Dan Bishop*

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The 8 hour Master Men's winner, **Hugh Stodart (North Balgowlah)** registered 18 laps while his female counterpart, **Joanne Tulk (Berkeley Vale)** completed 11 laps.

Super masters winner was **Andrew Radcliffe (Green Point)** registering 17 laps.

The 4 hour Shimano MTB Grand Prix was taken out by **Rockstar Racing team rider Josh Carlson** from Wollongong. Carlson dominated the race by gaining 11 laps. **Mudgee's Sebastian Jayne and Huw Moore (Turramurra)** both registered 10 laps but a two minute lead saw Jayne take second relegating Moore to third.

The women's 4 hour race was also close with all three solo podium getters on equal laps of eight. **Bree Webb (Wollongong)** claimed first place ahead of **Kathryn Cox (Narrabeen)** and **Emily May (Redfern)**. Webb finished under the four hour mark while Cox rode in after 4 hr 6 min, just 6 minutes ahead of May.

The masters men's category was won by **Jason Kaul (Mona Vale)** with 9 laps while **Kristen Vallance from Newcastle (Erina)** took out the women's division.

The 4 hour super masters (50+) winner was Newcastle's **Vincent Keir (Eleebana)** and the junior 4 hour race winner was **Canberra's Jordan Butler** both on 9 laps.

Single speed winner was **Paul Harwood from south Sydney (Janalli)** also on 9 laps.

The second round of the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix Series will be held at Awaba Mountain Bike Park, south of Newcastle on the 16 July with another endurance event and 4 and 8 hour races on the Saturday and the BANZAI LifeCycle time trail event on the Sunday. This weekend the Rocky Trail Crew will head to Awaba as well, where the downhill course will play host to the RedAss State Downhill Championships.

Event information and detailed results can be located at [www.rockytrailentertainment.com](http://www.rockytrailentertainment.com)



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