

Tupalski wins Elite Solo 7-hour race at Awaba MTB Park

Mark Tupalski from Canberra was the strongest solo elite rider at the second round of the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix at Awaba MTB Park on the Central Coast. Second-placed Andrew Lloyd keeps his lead in the Rocky Trail 4 and 7 hour mountain bike endurance racing series and fellow local rider Michelle Morris claims the female title of the day.



The current U23 Australian National 24-hour Solo Champion, **Mark Tupalski**, clocked in 11 laps in just over seven hours on the 12 km mountain bike track at the Awaba State Forest on Saturday.

"I haven't ridden this course for years and was surprised how physical course it was. The conditions were tough with a few muddy sections where I actually had to back it down a couple of gears to find my rhythm", said the Onyabike Belconnen & Civic racer at the finish line, adding he had pushed hard from the beginning purely by judging his fellow racers' quick pace from the start.

Second in the Elite Male category with 11 laps in 7:26 hours was series leader and local rider **Andrew Lloyd** who collected valuable points in the four-race series, which had commenced with round one in April at Stromlo Forest Park. Third was **Brad McFayden** from Narara with 10 laps.



A strong 7 hour female field was decided by local racer **Michelle Morris** who managed to cross the finish line just before the cut-off and achieved 9 laps in 7:47 ahead of **Lana Moy** from Collaroy and **Catherine Wood** from Binnaway who both finished on eight laps.

4 hours most popular category

More than 250 riders had been at the start line on a sunny morning at Awaba State Forest and despite a bleak weather forecast, conditions out on the track improved with every lap ridden, which added up to more than 1,000 on the day.

In addition to the prestigious 7 hour race categories, organisers Rocky Trail also offer 4-hour racing options and the field of more than 60 solo riders proofed the popularity of it.

With seven laps last year's winner of the GP4 hour Elite Solo Male category claimed the title again – **Jon Odams**, riding under the banner of his Sans Souci bike store "BikeCulture", crossed the finish line after 4:12 hours and 10 minutes ahead of Central Coast-endurance race icon **James Lamb**. **Andrew Lumley** from East Blaxland was third, also on seven laps. With 33:14 minutes Odams also clocked in the fastest male lap time of the day.

Tracey Robinson remembered

In the GP4 hour Elite Female category Blue Mountains-based **Wendy Walker** not only rode to victory, but with 42:58 minutes one of her 6 laps was also the fastest female lap time of the day. Wendy was thus awarded with the Tracey Robinson Trophy. Race organisers Rocky Trail set up this award in honour of one of their riders, Tracey Robinson, who had inspired so many fellow racers at Rocky Trail events and who had passed away earlier this year.



"I didn't know Tracey personally, but I am really honoured to get this award. It's such a nice way of remembering a fellow rider who is being missed at the start lines", said Walker of the award.

From Bike Shop Trophy to Croc Trophy

One of the biggest teams of the day proved to be the **Bernard Riders**. With seven teams on the start line they took out four of the 22 available top podium positions and also claimed line honours as the fastest overall team of the day with **Ondrej Slezak and Michael Kafka** racing in and winning the GP7 hour Elite Male Pairs category.

Ondrej Slezak, team manager and one of the main supporters of the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix with his importing business of Bernard Beer from the Czech Republic was content with his riders' results.

"We didn't have a complicated strategy for the day... just to ride onto as many podiums as possible", the avid endurance racer said with a cheeky smile of the outstanding efforts of the Bernard Riders. "Most of us are in training for the Crocodile Trophy in October this year and the crew from our new team bike shop Ashfield Cycles have been a great support."

With at least 12 riders the plan was to form a Bernard Riders Rocky Trail Racing "super-team", the biggest ever to start at the 10-day stage race in Far North Queensland, Slezak added.

The Bernard Riders team cooperation and their own store team's many podium positions, including Female Pairs in the GP7 hour race, will give **Ashfield Cycles** a boost in their lead of **JetBlack NSW/ACT Bike Shop Trophy**, which has been an initiative by Rocky Trail to promote local bike shops. By riding for their nominated bike shop at the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix races, store customers as well as crew members can put it in the lime light.

Round 3 of the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix will be held at The Australian Botanic Garden, Mt Annan on 25 August and the final series race will be hosted at Appin on 29 September.

Results:

GP7 hour Elite Male

1. Mark Tupalski	Fisher, ACT	11 laps/7:00:20, Onyabike Belconnen & Civic
2. Andrew Lloyd	Barnsley, NSW	11 laps/7:26:06
3. Brad McFayden	Narara, NSW	10 laps/7:00:25

GP7 hour Elite Female

1. Michelle Morris	Shelly Beach, NSW	9 laps/7:47:07, Ivy Lou
2. Lana Moy	Collaroy, NSW	8 laps/7:01:41
3. Catherine Wood	Binnaway, NSW	8 laps/7:27:46

GP4 hour Elite Male

1. Jon Odams	Sans Souci, NSW	7 laps/4:12:04, Bikeculture / Mercedes-Benz
2. James Lamb	Greenpoint, NSW	7 laps/4:21:39, Chops
3. Andrew Lumley	East Blaxland, NSW	7 laps/4:31:23, Panther Cycles

GP4 hour Elite Female

1. Wendy Walker	Faulconbridge, NSW	6 laps/4:29:25
2. Vanessa Boatwright	Collaroy, NSW	5 laps/4:13:25
3. Eliza Eldridge Bassett	Fisher, ACT	5 laps/4:17:41

Photos: Rocky Trail/Deubel Bicycles

Photos can be used free of charge, please contact Rocky Trail for high-res files.



For detailed results and more event information

- visit the Rocky Trail website at www.rockytrailentertainment.com or
- contact Juliane Wisata at 0416 737 972 or via
- email to juliane@rockytrailentertainment.com

