

AUSTRALIAN MTBO CHAMPIONSHIPS CARNIVAL 2017 WINGELLO SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS OCTOBER 4TH TO 8TH



The Australian MTBO Championships have concluded for another year with most competitors coming away from the events with a positive view on the location, courses and running of the numerous events. The strong Kiwi contingent of 50 plus riders set the tone as far as comradery and participation in the events was concerned. It made the running of the Night/Day event at Belanglo possible and they used this as an opportunity to clear the cob webs and get ready for the Championships events. It was a close Aus/NZ Challenge up till the Long event and it looks like they had better legs on the day to take on the hills around Wingello Forest. Congratulations to the NZ Team, individual place getters and all competitors for getting out and enjoying the sport of MTBO.

It is not an easy task for organisers to get the attention of the public, MTB riders and orienteer's to attend MTBO events, especially in Australia. It is a great sport when families get involved and from an Aussie perspective, to see how far Lucy and Fergus Mackie have gone in the National and International scene, the future looks bright. We had a small but really focused team to run the events and as the Carnival Organiser, I cannot thank them enough.

We would like to thank Orienteering NSW for their full support of this event and putting up the funds for some great give a ways with the socks and head bands. A big thanks to Wildfire Sports for their continued sponsorship and the prizes and vouchers were greatly appreciated. Leigh Privett kindly donated a Miry map board which was given to Nat Carroll for entertaining the crowd at the presentation dinner.

If you feel like reading a few more pages, I have a short wrap up of each event and my thoughts or views on a few issues that popped up, nothing too extreme. If after reading the wrap up's, you may have a few constructive comments which may help the organisers of future major MTBO events. Please forward the comments to: gregbacon63@gmail.com

Australia/New Zealand Challenge

It looked like being a close tussle after the results of the Sprint and middle events but the Kiwis romped home after the long event. They won by 23 points to 12 and regained the Challenge flag. New Zealand will be hosting the next challenge in Central Otago on the South Island from 26th to 28th April 2018.



NIGHT CHAMPS BELANGLO

The Night event was included in the carnival as the Aus/NZ challenge became part of the Championships. Rob Garden suggested a mid week event to attract a few more from over the ditch. It worked and Rob Prentice set a "just achievable" score course around the fire trails in Belanglo Forest. The event was more of a Day/Twilight/Night event with competitors choosing when to leave or joining in on a couple of mass starts.



BELANGLO HOUSE

The local magpie stopped swooping as the number of riders increased through out the day. The navigation was straight forward as it was mainly a matter of route planning and execution. We had a few problems with the computer as it was not providing the score and time for the competitors. Our computer guru was not due to arrive till the Friday night so we managed to make it work on the results board.

There was a little confusion as to class winners as those riding at Night had a disadvantage to those competing during the day. Seeing that we were making the rules up on the go, it was decided that the Night starters would be placed higher than the day starters. We did not get too many complaints as everyone was busy either riding or talking around the BBQ. We had a couple of falls with the ladies getting torn elbows and swollen knees from hitting the loose sand.



**Cassie Thompson taking the family for a ride on the score course.
Thanks to Rob Prentice for setting the event.**

PRACTICE EVENT - PENROSE STATE FOREST

The practice event at Penrose was another easy going affair with most competitors taking it easy around the Score course. Penrose is another large pine plantation area with mostly good condition tracks with some solid hills thrown in. The start line became congested at one stage, so we decided on another mass start for those ready to go. It was interesting watching the riders head off in all directions.



There was a close call with a black snake resting near the start area and getting angry as people walked by. Not too much excitement at this event and luckily no injuries. Thanks to Michael Ridley Smith for placing the controls and collection along with Toy Martin and Rudi Landseidel.



SPRINT - WINGELLO VILLAGE

The sprint location was originally planned to be run on the Middle map and the sprint held around Kirrikee Outdoor Centre. It took months of red tape to get the approvals to run the event in Wingello Village. Thanks to Tim, all the approvals came together and a fair amount of time was spent on mapping and developing the course. Several single tracks were constructed to link some of the tracks and provide route choice around the course. The area around the school worked out well to finish off and provide a good spectator point and meeting place after the event.



The course had a bit of everything from fast forest roads, tight and twisty single track, formed roads and the small maze of tracks around the school. The times were very close in all the classes and our course times worked out well. We were greeted by egg and bacon rolls before and after the event. Wingello Primary School certainly did a great job in catering. The local farmer even gave us the paddock to park in and mowed it before the event.

We did not get any negative feedback on the location and the courses. A few questions were asked on having two minutes to read the map and not one minute which is the norm. It did make it tight in moving from one location to another but the start arena seemed very relaxed and moved along smoothly. I thought there may have been some congestion in the small single tracks near the start but everyone was well spread out along the course.

We were not allowed to sign post the roads or have a controlled crossing with a flag operator as part of the Council approval. There was a little confusion with some riders going onto the main road before heading onto the cycle way. The only other complaint was the number of riders not wearing helmets while they were warming up. This was addressed at the presentation dinner.

All in all, it was a great start to the Championships, thanks to Tim Hackney for the ground work and course setting.



It was a big crowd around the results board and P & C Canteen

MIDDLE – WINGELLO QUARRIES

It was a bit of a scramble moving from the sprint to the middle for the organising crew. We had just enough time to move the start from Wingello town to the middle then return to collect all the gear at the school and set up registration at Wingello Forest camping area.

This was a difficult area in which to set the middle distance event due to the long sections of single tracks constructed by Highland Trails, the clearing of pine plantations and minimal connecting trails. Hamish Mackie worked in with Highland Trails to make some connector tracks between the single tracks and main roads. With these linking tracks and some clever course layouts, the middle turned into a fun and challenging course. The short legs around the quarries caused a few problems with mis punches and there were a few technical descents and climbs on Courses 1 & 2.

Quite a few riders mentioned that this was their favourite course due to the technical nature of the course and picking the right short cut between track and road.

The course lengths and times were once again close to the mark with the top contenders in each class setting very quick times and not much between them.



The start was moved up the hill from the camping ground to cut out a few boring sections of forest roads.

A section of the single track heading around the southern quarry with the linking track to the quarry off to the right.



KIRRIKEE OUTDOOR CENTRE

The facilities at Kirrikee were selected early in the piece as initially it was planned to have the middle distance start and finish at the centre with the presentation dinner to follow. Due to a few problems with access through adjoining properties the event was relocated but we still decided to stay with Kirrikee for the presentation dinner and camping/accommodation facilities. The centre has undergone a large amount of renovation work with new showers and toilets. A big thanks goes to Joe Seiler the centre manager, for all his help and flexibility in allowing us to stay there.

The presentation dinner was fully booked out and with a few extras getting tickets on the weekend seats and tables were in short supply. Choice Events catering did a great job in catering for the 134 guests and there was plenty of seconds available for the main course and dessert. In between courses there was a give away of a Miry Map board supplied by Leigh Privett and the winner was the best story from the days events. It turned out a fun part of the evening with Nat Carroll (12 yrs) getting the loudest applause for his story of getting stuck on one of the steep sections on the middle course, yelling out for help (no one close by) then having his chain come off after dragging his bike up the hill. Heaps of give a ways thanks to ONSW, Wildfire Sports, Miry Map boards and Rob Prentice donating wine and chocolates.

I think we finished the dinner and presentations in good time with proceedings over by around 9.45.

The presentation dinner seemed to pull the whole carnival together and it was a fun night for all. Thanks for the helpers in cleaning and re stacking the tables and chairs in the hall.



LONG – WINGELLO STATE FOREST

The Long Distance event once again used the Highland MTB trails and the fast fire roads around the northern portion of the pine plantation and eucalypt forests. The start area was originally planned to be located to the north of the camping area however due to logging, we lost 600m of flowing trails through the plantation area and we needed to change the start location. We did our best to describe the start layout in the final bulletin plus the layouts were posted on the notice boards at rego and the start. It still caused a few headaches with some courses having their 1st control located on the north side of the out of bounds area. When in doubt read the instructions!

We hope you enjoyed the track through the spectator control plus a few additional tracks that were cut in or resurrected to make up for the previous lost tracks. Many of the legs had the option to take the single tracks or the fire roads. Hopefully there was not too much time lost if you enjoyed staying on the single tracks. Once again the times were very fast and very close between the placegetters.

The Wingello Primary School once again came to our aid and provided a sausage sizzle and drinks at the end of the ride. Thank you to all for supporting the school on both days as it helped their fund raising and saved us heaps of work.



The start area at Wingello Forest Camping area

The Wingello School P&C hard at work During the long event



The spectator control near the camping area was a good chance to catch up on the action and cheer on team mates in the challenge