

OPPERMAN QUEENSLAND 1996

By Dr Gale Schaub

It has been a great source of pleasure for me as both ride organiser and participant to be part of the Brisbane region's second Opperman All Day Trial. The event takes on a special character in our club - there is a distinct atmosphere of camaraderie which is evident both during the ride and most especially at the awards breakfast Coupled with the sense of accomplishment that any cyclist gets from completing a 24-hour event, especially first-time riders, I would suspect that for most of us the O.A.D.T. borders on the ethereal.

Last year's event attracted four teams which consisted of twenty riders and this statistic was nearly matched in 1996. Again we had four teams but drew in a few less riders - fourteen in total. Most of the field were Opperman event veterans with several of these completing prior trials in either Queensland, Victoria, or both. May I extend my personal congratulations to the five participants who completed their first 24-hour event Peter Brennan, Tony Croke, Laurie Handcock, Wayne Murray, and Daniel Radford.

One of the most accomplished teams this year was *Three Men and a Baby*, a mixed bag of nuts from Queensland and Victoria. Team captain and Audax Queensland founder Dave Minter joined two Victorian PBP finishers for a short 363-kilometer hop, skip and a jump around Toowoomba then back to Ipswich - just long enough to get their legs warmed up I'm sure! Audax Queensland welcomes Gary Beasley and Phil Rowley both recent migrants to the Brisbane area Phil's newly-born graduated to the rank of team support member and hopes that Santa has a spare child stoker kit tucked away in his sleigh!

Mark Sparshott was back again for his second reign as team captain. The tandem duo Andrew and Nicole McPhee, members of last year's *Gusto*, pulled out a week before the event because Andy likes to play with roller blades - his broken arm is his unfortunate testimony. Within 24 hours all the team captains knew of Mark's predicament - he was one rider short of an official start. Luckily he found a last-minute replacement and *Warhorse* was born. With a new team name and rookie riders Laurie Handcock and Wayne Murray, the team successfully completed 363 kilometres looping around Toowoomba and descending the range towards Brisbane. A round of applause surrounded their efforts at the awards breakfast - they were the only team to tough it out without personal support

Three of the four riders in *Tan Dam* are veteran Opperman trialists. Team captain Ross Kersley and the tandem dynamo of Howard and Jenelle Davies were joined by the talented Audax rookie Tony Croke, who has been riding a bike for just about one year. What a way to finish his first annual! The 361-kilometer trek up the Brisbane Valley Highway to Esk, Kilcoy and back through the Bay, excluded Tony's friend, Bill Langevad, who did not start due to a back injury. These two young and gracious riders have participated in many of our events this year and have committed to next years super series. I know that I speak for many of our veterans when saying how much we enjoy their company during rides. Support crew captain and PBP finisher, Kristine Kersley, wanted to be by her husband's side on her bike rather than in the car but she decided against riding Opperman this year. For the past few months she has been working on how to acquire a child stoker kit - if you know what I mean! The new team member is due in March. Last year the Kersley's and the Davies' set the Opperman Queensland distance record of 392 kilometres as members of *Team Two Up* which consisted of three tandems and two singles. This year the gruesome twosome factor was reduced, nonetheless, Ross pointed out that the team name has much to do with the difficulty that single cyclists have when riding with tandems - just reverse this year's team name - it has something to do with those "damn tandems"!

In the past three years I have had the good fortune of being team captain for three talented groups of Opperman trialists: *The Brisbane Bonkers* in the 1994 Victorian Opperman, *Team Sequence* in the 1995 inaugural

Queensland Opperman, and this year's *The Generation Gap*. The team name reflects the age differential between riders: Lindsay Green 64, Gale Schaub 47, Peter Brennan 38, and Daniel Radford 16. I've asked Tim Laughler to do a little research to determine if our team has both the oldest and youngest nation-wide participants in this year's Opperman - we'll keep you posted on the result of his findings!

During our 390-kilometer spin through the back roads of Dalby towards Brisbane I was again accompanied by my dear friend Lindsay Green who completed last year's PBP. The old guy (sic!) never seems to tire even after suffering from gastric influenza one week before the event Lindsay kept us honest on the hills. We kept chasing his still and solid upper body and high cadence - a riding style that he has become famous for. A new friendship has been born in the short year that I have known Peter Brennan and his wife Donna. His jovial, extrovert personality is the perfect complement to his abilities and accomplishments as a cyclist

The sense of pride that I have for this team exceeds that of any of my prior Opperman experiences and that pride is due, more than anything else, to the pleasurable association with our youngest rider, Daniel Radford. "Heavens the boy is smooth and still and his wheel is so straight - so much like Lindsay", I said to myself as I observed his riding style... "and for one so young and who's been riding a bike for less than one year!" I exclaimed under my breath. I suspect Lindsay had figured all of this out before me when he pointed to Daniel who was passing us on a hill and simply said, "Look at that!" More important than Daniel's riding style is the maturity he shows for one so young. Long-distance cycling is more than a display of strength and endurance - a successful distance rider must know the importance of patience and proper pacing. In this, Daniel never showed any sign of weakness - there was never one complaint. He was both strong and sure of himself to the very end.

Donna and Daniel's father, Rob, provided support for our team. May I extend my sincere thanks for all of your time and efforts in making our adventure as comfortable as possible. To my wife Diane thank you for securing our team's overnight stay and breakfast in the morning. To Kris, Paul, Kelly, and Georgina who supported *Tan Dam*, and to Mark and Catherine who cared for *Three Men and a Baby* and provided secret controls thank you for all of your hard work. We hope to be celebrating again next year at the Ipswich Motor Inn and enjoying the fine cuisine of their master chef and my true blue riding partner, Rene Cabourdin. Until next year folks...keep spinning!



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