

# In Queensland

Compiled by Sandy Vigar, Queensland Oppy Organiser

At 8 am on a warm March day, four Oppy teams set off from various points in south-east Queensland and two TrOppy teams from Mackay to challenge themselves to ride at least 360 km in 24 hours. Their experiences were very different and the attached reports are a great read. Here is a summary. They all did Oppy proud!

### Four Decades

#### Report: Anne Latimer

Months of planning, preparation and coercion of partners to provide ride support for the 'Four Decades' Team of Anne, Deb, Lynne and Holli showed through in the successful completion of a Queensland Oppy by an all-female team. Riding through the northern and Bayside suburbs of Brisbane and nearby towns then looping back to Ipswich, to meet the other SEQ finishers for breakfast at Brothers, Anne provided the following great summary of lessons learnt:

1. Preparation, proper nutrition and hard training are the key to success (see the full 7Ps in Anne's report);
2. Team harmony means a lot when times are tough. Everyone goes through a bad patch of these rides. This is the time for mutual support and encouragement;
3. Good support is crucial. Having the food and water ready at checkpoints takes a lot of pressure off. It leaves the riders to "ride" and not have to worry about filling water bottles and rustling up food (e.g. pies, fish and chips and Snickers bars);
4. Navigating by cue sheets is the test of a good Audax rider. Batteries on GPS can go flat and if distances have not been kept then disaster is at the next turn. Thanks for that tip Dino (the Legend).
5. Determination is needed to get through the "bonk" and keep going until the next checkpoint is reached.

### TrOppy 2013

#### Report: Peter McCallum

Two teams of three riders left Mackay at 7 am on Saturday and were treated with respect all the way to Townsville, 24 hours later. Every time a truck passed, they went to the other side of the road if possible. I think the Audax rules on

reflective vests and having good lights helped our cause—we were respecting them and we gained their respect.

Well how did the ride go? It was probably the easiest 400 of all time. Six of us (David, Phillip, Jenny, Peter, Troy and Peter) rode in two teams. We spent about one to two hours at each of the six controls. Rode at speeds approaching 40 km/h with little effort, in the end we had to slow down deliberately. We had a strong tailwind all day followed by a cool still night. The roads are in almost perfect condition, especially the last 100 km of hot mix from Ayr to Townsville. If we had been chasing the record, this would have been the time to do it. Maybe sometime in the future things will be as perfect again but I doubt it.

### Keep the Pedals Turning

#### Report: Christian Killeen

This year, the 'Keep the Pedals Turning' team set out an ambitious goal to break the 500 km mark in true Oppy

style, unsupported. With a 515 km course set out, the team of Roger, Christian, Andrew and Brett set out from Toowoomba heading west. As the heat increased during the day, our folly was becoming apparent with little civilisation in the area, about 15 km from Dalby and with the temperature now hovering around 40 degrees on road we had run short of water. A few moments rest under one of a very few trees was in order, before the last push towards Dalby. We continued on for our next leg south to Millmerran another 90 km away. The locals at the Cecil Plains hotel were more than surprised to see four shabby looking cyclists roll in, but inside the relative air-conditioned comforts of this true country pub was the only place to be on a hot Autumn day.

On the tough slog back to Toowoomba, the roads were good and the night air, while cool to start was a pleasure to ride as we gazed at the millions of stars above in the clear sky. We'd made Toowoomba by 11 pm and had a sound average of

KBC Bubble Blowers



about 27 km/h (riding time) but decided that we would pull up stumps, after 330 km completed in about 15 hours unsupported. Despite the setback the overwhelming feeling was largely upbeat and some important lessons learnt for future campaigns with the team already discussing ways to overcome the challenge of riding such long distances unsupported.

## KBC Bubble Blowers

### Report: Kirsty Broun

Our team of four cyclists, Shane, Ian, Simon and Kirsty started and conquered the Fleche Opperman Challenge, riding 360 km in 24 hours. We had a terrific time and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

We started our journey from Northgate and headed out over the Gateway Bridge to Wynnum, Wellington Point, Victoria Point and then down to Runaway Bay in the Gold Coast. The weather was perfect and the wind was non-existent. After recuperating, we headed back to Brisbane and over the Gateway Bridge, stopping to admire the night view at the top before heading off to Redcliffe and back to Northgate, where we decided to pull up stumps for the



Just a Nice Day Out

night. It was 10.15 pm and we felt we deserved a well-earned sleep, after completing 280 km in 11 hours and averaging over 25 km/h for the day. It was a mighty effort.

We woke up at 3.30 am and headed out at 4 am. We arrived at Brothers at 7.50 am with ten minutes to spare. Our journey was over. We were all overwhelmed with excitement and fatigue at the same time. Speaking as an ex-professional cyclist, it was one of the proudest moments of my cycling career. It was truly amazing to finish with such inspirational men that had the best team attitude and determination. I have never felt more part of a team than at that moment when all crossed the 360 km mark, cheered and gave each other high-fives. It was a great feeling and a very proud moment.

## Just a Nice Day Out

### Report: Andrew Gills

Setting off from Lowood, our team of Martin, Dino, Rodney, Andrew and James set off on flat quiet country roads for 70 km to Toogoolawah. Then roads started to roll gently, the day warmed up significantly and we all seemed to struggle a bit. It was a relief to reach Atkinsons Dam.

As the shadows lengthened, we reached checkpoint 3 at Ma Ma Creek as dusk fell. We'd ridden about 190 km. As a team, the ride to Mulgowie was a bit of a low point. The call of the 300 km sleep stop was strong but we were all at different stages of fatigue.

From Mulgowie we rode into Gatton and on to our sleep stop at Sandy and Martin's place in Lowood. The climb up the hill to Sandy and Martin's house was a tough challenge. At 4.45 Sandy kicked us out on the road so that we could ride the final 70 km to the finish.

Mathematically, we had to average 23 km/h to complete the ride in the allowable time and our pace was certainly not this fast. Here's the thing about mathematics: it doesn't account for the power of guts and determination. Nor for the way the rising sun affects a group of cyclists' speed. With less than 40 km to ride, we all perked up and started to make good time. We rode a full 5 km stretch at 28-30 km/h, which saw us come to the 335 km mark. We arrived at Brothers Leagues Club Ipswich at 7:56 am, having covered 366 km just four minutes shy of the cut-off. Together, our team was successful at completing the 2013 Fleche Opperman challenge.

## Last Word

I couldn't say it any better than Christian did:

You really have to take your hat off to those of earlier years, such as our great Audax patron Sir Oppy himself, who would complete such vast distances with little more than what they could carry on their backs and the help of locals along the way.

Well done to all the teams that participated and achieved their own goals, it is always great to see the new faces coming on board to experience the challenge of distance riding.

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