

## Bedrock - Keith Heinrich

Audax, defined as "a cycling sport in which participants attempt to cycle long distances within a pre-defined time limit". My maiden outing with Audax was a reasonably solid course of 200km with 2700m of climbing - not my strong suit as it happens. A challenge then of the mind over the body as I propelled my velocipede around the prescribed course, up hills for kilometres at a time and then plunging down the other side at speeds that make your eyes water. That was the day ahead.

Brian, Andrew and Glen would accompany me. Brian is an accomplished long distance rider having completed 1200km rides including the Paris Prest Paris, the pinnacle of Audax riding. All three completed the course inside 11 hours. I stopped at the 140km mark having run out of legs and the desire to continue another 60 km through the hills.

Before signing up I thought a fair bit about this ride. I have ridden all the various loops at some point, just not all in one go. I had calculated a run sheet based on a relaxed pace at which I felt I could maintain for the duration. The first leg up Mt Nebo and down the other side was accomplished fairly easily and not far outside the time I allocated. Following a pause to wait for the group to assemble and rest, the next leg proved troublesome. I ended up walking up the last hundred metres or so to the top of Clear Mountain, my legs were not cooperating at all which was a worrisome development. Winn Road was taken at a leisurely pace while I waited for my legs to make a comeback which they finally did on Torrens Road.

Hydration is a key consideration to ensure consistent performance. I had calculated two bottles per 50km and the stops in between to refill. By Narangba I was out (it was a 30 degrees or so by now). A skill of the experienced Audax rider is to find water anywhere. Andrew had been riding with me and found a tap in the most unexpected place. While we were refilling Brian and Glen sailed by and so the chase was on from Narangba to Burpengary where we caught up with them.

From there to Preece's was windy, gusty at up to 30km/h and we were riding into the wind. Once we got to the edge of the bay, I seriously just about got blown off the bike. Under those conditions it took about 90 fairly unpleasant minutes to travel the 20km from the highway to Preece's. At Preece's hamburgers, fries, coffee and gallons of water were consumed before heading back out into the wind. The next 20km took another hour including pausing for a photo. The conditions across the bridge were as bad as I have ever encountered, once again just about getting blown off the bike a few times. There were whitecaps across the bay, not something I have seen like this for a while. A bonus of the awful conditions, no other riders on the bridge, something that rarely happens. Actually no one on the bridge, go figure.

At the 140km mark, I parted company with the group. I was exhausted and the prospect of another 60km back through the hills lacked any sort of appeal after nearly 8 hours of riding. The group continued through Dayboro and Samford and finished their ride in just under 11 hours.

Brian mentioned that this course is usually done in the rain and therein is the thing that sets Audax riders apart. Whatever the situation, they are determined to finish the ride.

I'll be back, but I'll need to sort out the hill climbing first. And the headspace around riding on no matter what. That's the key ingredient I think.