

The strange thing about this event is that nearly everyone enjoyed the challenge, the tough navigation and the average of around three hours on the course. With just on 90 starters, perfect weather and a great course the event had all the elements to make a memorable event. At the briefing competitors were warned that the second foot stage was going to be a challenge and they had the option of dropping the leg to make it back to the finish in time. The first foot stage was a scatter course in probably the best area of Belanglo, heaps of rock features and open pine forest, still caused a few problems if you went up the wrong gully. After that it was an MTBO leg on mainly rough fire trails, a few hills and some controls located just off the tracks.

The third leg was a 2 to 3 k line course on the NW edge of the Miners Despair map. If you got this stage right it made a big difference in the time taken to get around the course. The vegetation was fairly thick and there were a few extra bike trails that were not on the map. There were quite a few competitors that struggled on the second control and if you missed some of the controls it took a few minutes to relocate and try again. It was great to see the first timers/non orienteers having a go in this section, some nailed it and some struggled.

After this stage it was back on the bikes for a fast blast through the pine plantations with some of the controls off the tracks once again. By now the legs were a little on the tired stage and there was still one more foot stage to go. The last foot stage was a line course with three controls with the option of running or riding from the last control to the finish, I think most rode back to the finish line.

Greg Barbour was a clear winner in the twisted course by nearly 30 minutes, I saw him in action a few times and he is gone in a flash from controls and transitions. Andrew Haigh and Marina Iskhkova were only separated by a few minutes into second and third place. In the Bitte course Andrew Power led the way with Lizzie Ingham and Eoin Rothery rounding out the top three.

I had a chance to chat to quite a few finishers and non finishers after the event, most were knackered but they all enjoyed the course as they were warned that it was going to be a tough one. Although we like to see most competitors finish the event in a reasonable time, the limitations on where we could run the event had an impact on the course length and the difficulty in the navigation.

Thanks to Mary Fein for producing such a challenging course, Michael Roylance for organising the event and control placement and lastly Andy Simpson for SI/Entry, course setting and clean up.

Must mention one competitor (Myall Quint, hope I got the right name) for pulling up at the finish after nearly five hours then volunteering to take his 4x4 to rescue Michael Roylance who became stuck in his car collecting the MTBO controls.

Thanks again to everyone for supporting the DuO Series.

GREG BACON