

EVENT REPORT - Waroona 3rd April 2011

There was a very pleasant one and a quarter hour drive down the freeway toward Waroona. Unfortunately arrival at 7am at the start point, the Waroona Recreation Centre was rewarded with serious dry easterly winds gusting up to over 25kph, not the ideal wind when you know the first 20km of the ride is up hill into the Easterly.

Nevertheless, set up and registration for in excess of 600 riders comprising some 100 teams went without a hitch. The new rego system, 12months in development, was great

The Croissant Express coffee van was there to provide pre ride sustenance.

The first teams were off under the new brilliantly coloured blue BWA gantry at 9.30am. We followed a few minutes later and thankfully the wind had died substantially. The first climb starts after a couple of kms and, unless you have had a good warm up, seems to take forever. I am lingering at the back, definitely unable to go to the front, but trying not to end up dropping out the back. We have an extremely well disciplined group, with the stronger guys maintaining the right tempo so as not to put us "weaker links" into the "hurt locker" too early. We had a group of 8 and after having done these events for many years, know, that the art of a cyclo ride is to stay as close together as a group as possible. The stronger even dropped in behind so as to let us slower guys ride at our own tempo. This was a bit hard this year for a couple of the guys who basically rode the whole ride in the 53-11 as they were training for the upcoming UCI masters race.

Finally, reached the first "peak" with us having passed a few teams and some of the stronger teams churning past us.

The vehicle traffic on the road was negligible as the event organisers had arranged partial road closures- absolutely brilliant.

Turned left and headed toward Nanga, Lane Poole and the "one lane bridge" on our way to Dwellingup. Bridges are always interesting, downhill toward them is brilliant, we had a fantastic one line peloton moving along and down at around 60kph before the Peel Cycle Club volunteers had us slowing before the one lane bridge and then wham, the climb up and out of the valley. A nice serious climb, speed reduced dramatically and the thought "where is the bloody top" starting to surface.

Nevertheless upward and onward and into Dwellingup, a circle around the block and past the pub (and about 100 motor bikes) and then the return 40km to Waroona.

Pain is starting to set in and a couple of us are starting to doubt our "legs". It is now about encouraging each other that the only way back to the car is on the bike. One of our groups is heard to say "I am told what to do at home, I am told what to do out here, when will the nightmare end". When you get to the finish Lori, that is the answer. Only one more hill, downhill from here, bugger, where did this hill come from, it wasn't here on the way out.

Must be downhill from the next hill. "Do you want a push" "hey mate, you are looking pretty stuffed", "don't you just love this Thompson/ Woodlands pain course". "Bugger off, I can't believe I let you talk me into this nightmare". Look on the bright side, the Eagles won!!

At least you have given it a go, what about all those "would have, could have" guys who didn't turn up.

Down the final hill and all is forgotten, oh no, I thought it was the final hill Lori, but then we are over and homeward bound and it is all smiles. The pain is forgotten and so is all memory of the great course. But he will be back as he has been year after year.

Most of us have experienced that bad day when we are the "weaker link" but it is about the team around you and the camaraderie that it engenders. We actually haven't seen Lori this week, and now that I think about it, did he come back!!

All in all it was a terrific day, the presentations and food were enjoyed by the 600 participants with the next event at the flat Safety Bay/ Garden Island course (over Col de Causeway) and to be held on the 15th May.