

## Race report for Tre-x Dirtfest Riverside Oaks NSW

It was a cool morning as we headed out for day 1 of the In2Adventure dirtfest weekend at Riverside Oaks golf resort in Sydney. It's a unique racing weekend that great fun to compete in but at the same time you know your going to be destroyed by the end of the weekend's events.

The dirtfest format for NSW is 700-20-8 offroad triathlon sat morning followed by an 8k trail run that afternoon and to finish things off a 50k mtb race sun morning. The lowest combined time for these events take the title of dirt master / mistress for the weekend. There were many competing in the events over the weekend but only a select few who took up the complete Dirt master challenge.

As the gun fired and we got underway for the tri buy the first turning buoy in the hurksbry river I knew I was going to struggle in the water. From a big week of work my arms were heavy and I struggled to keep with the main field. It's a 2 lap swim with a 100m run between laps and a I managed to stay in touch with the main group but certainly wasn't feeling comfortable. At the swim exit there was another challenge, at least for me. The exit up the boat ramp was a bit slippery and not sure if it was just me but really struggled to get a footing. So made the decision to pretty much beach myself like a whale to drag myself out. From what I heard it was a pretty funny sight.

Making our way to transition proved another challenge, a couple of us made a massive mistake by not checking everything we could before the race for possible hazards. We were told there would still be some thorns around the place but seeing the path to transition cleared I assumed there would be none, big mistake. A couple of metres from the bikes I stepped in a patch and it hurt like hell. Had to keep going till I got to my bike to pick em out before being able to get ready for the bike.

The bike is currently my strongest leg so straight away I was pushing hard to try and pull back some time. it's a brilliant mtb course with lots of single track, some tecky sections, fast down hills and pinch climbs. As I passed a few people on the ride I knew I was pulling back a bit of time.

Heading into T2 had a great transition from bike shoes and straight into my Vibram Komodo Sports and headed out fast. It was quite a challenging run lap with open fields short hard climbs and steep down hills.

Still not feeling great pushed as hard as I could through the lap but popped at the top of the main hill and had a bit of a "spit" in the bushes. From then on backed of a bit with the thought there was still a lot of racing still to come.

Was pretty happy with the tri result as got to 2<sup>nd</sup> place in opens, was time for a rest and refuel to prepare for the trail run in a few hours. This was achieved by relaxing in the golf club and sharing a bowel of chips or two and downing jugs of coke and water.

We got back to race HQ with just enough time to limber up a little before everyone was off. it's a mass start and by the end of the first open field the pace had settled and spread out. I know im not the strongest at running hills but I love down hills so my plan was to pace things up and open up down. This worked well for me on the first lap I passed 4 people on the down and kept the tempo on the flat for the lap. On the second same plan, pushing hard across the top and ducking in front of a guy before the down hill I was off. From running so much in my Vibram fivefingers Ive found im now running lighter than ever before and just rock hop and bounded down the hill. As I looked up from the bottom the bloke that was with me at the top was now 50+ metres behind and I pushed on hard to the finish.

With Day 1 down everyone got cleaned up and went for a big pasta dinner in the golf resort. Its also where all those who stayed and are racing the entire weekend can find out the standings and time gaps.

In saying that found out I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5min behind so that would be my target in the mtb race.

Day2 felt a little tired as we started to line up for the 50k. For this race it's a lamonz start where you leave your bikes in an area away from the start and on the gun run to your bike to get started. After the climb up the first hill I was feeling good and made the decision when the track opened up to push on in front and try to hold off the field. I know my strengths and how my body reacts witch my coach also knows and later would exploit.

By the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> and only 1-2 back. Not to far through I passed the guy in 1<sup>st</sup> who got another flat. Feel abit sorry for him, would have had a great weekend if he didn't flat 5 times over the weekend. But sometimes that's racing, form experience I know how it feels.

Starting the last lap I was hurting but still in front and pushing as hard as I could. ½ way through the lap still in front and actually thinking I could actually win this when I saw Connie (coach) gaining on me fast. I seem to really die towards the end of a race where she is so consistent through the entire event. With a bit more work hope to be at that point soon. I kept on her wheel through the single tracks but as the open section and hills came up she pulled away. Was still a great result for me 1<sup>st</sup> in mens and second overall by only 1 minute.

In the overall weekend results I finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> 2min behind. Next time ill get that extra time. And the whole field got "chicked" Connie was dominant and was the weekends fastest competitor by a little over a minute.

Would love to say a massive thank you to the Silvertri's was great fun to travel and hang out with you both for the weekend.

Robyn, Simon and the In2Adventure crew for working so hard to put on a brilliant and enjoyable event once again. Simon and Coach Jeff, fantastic MTB course one of the best ive ridden on.

To Riverside Oaks for letting us use their grounds and facilities for the weekend, it a beautiful place to race and a great club to enjoy.

Max and Sally from Barefootinc.com.au love using the fivefingers and feel so much more comfortable and faster in them.

And Connie from Eternal Fitness, thanks for being a great training partner and for the coaching.

Geoff Suess