

Killamunda Challenge - Do You Know Your Countries that the Equator Passes Through?

Norm Black and Mark Hoffmann participated as a pair in the 3rd Killamunda Challenge on Sunday 20 June as an alternative to flat events like the Perth Marathon. There were 80 competitors in the event with the majority having an adventure racing and/or orienteering background. The winners times were expected to be around 4-4.5 hours, so similar in duration to a HIM, but the distance is markedly shorter and the terrain substantially more difficult.

What is the Killamunda Challenge – it is an Adventure Race of sorts combining running, mountain bike and orienteering. The event started and finished at Fred Jacoby Forest Park and had 3 run legs connected by the mountain bike, with all the control points being required to navigate to and between, and a quiz 2/3 of the way through to enable you to continue. Limited information was supplied about the course before the event with the location only being announced at the start of the week. Two maps were handed out at registration with the main map information being 25 years old, and the second of limited relevance. Three more maps were progressively made available during the event and each of the maps were to a different scale to add to the mental challenge. It was a demanding event with the first run leg being the simplest, and with the principal aim of breaking up the starting group before the MTB stage. The run had 10 controls each worth between 20 and 50 points. The controls were based on world cup soccer countries with Australia's 1st round opponents worth 50 points and a total of 200 points required to be able to start the mountain bike section. With Norm on the team knowing the names of the Australian competitors in the first round wasn't a challenge and we managed to get through the first stage (albeit our time was in the lowest quartile).

Then it was onto the bike within the first km you had to carry the bike over the pipeline crossing (photo). Some of the MTB sections were familiar having been previously traversed in training which assisted to some limited degree. Individuals started the event 15 minutes after the pairs and within the first half hour we were being caught by the first individuals!! At the third mountain bike control the event changed back to a run challenge with 8 control points matching 8 countries and you must visit the controls for the 6 countries that the equator passes through (Map 3). Unfortunately for us we ended up having to visit all 8 controls after we incorreced assumed that Kenya was not on the equator and also costing us a lot of time going across country rather than on tracks – a substantial lack of experience relative to those with an orienteering background. And then back on the MTB...



When navigating to the 5th MTB control point we made a large navigation error which took us a long time to identify and resolve, fatigue was potentially a contributor to the poor decisions at the time with the event now being underway for about 3.5 hours (and in hindsight we would have been better off to incur the penalty for missing the control and keep moving forward). From there the next 3 controls were more readily navigated to....however at MTB control 8 we missed the cut off time as a result of our earlier issues and this meant that we lost the potential for points from 3 other MTB controls and could only finish after all other teams that finished the full course. It was then along the black top of Mundaring Weir Road back to the start point at Fred Jacoby Forest Park to finish with a standard intermediate difficulty orienteering event. Some of the fun had gone out of the event at this stage as we had been short coursed and we walked more of this stage than we would have otherwise, we managed to complete the course in a total time of 5hr 34 minutes placing 11 out of 22 teams which we thought wasn't too bad for first timers. Would we recommend it – yes. Would we do it again – yes, but not yet decided whether to tackle the second similar event which is the KillaFergus on in the Bunbury Region on 18 July.

Anyone up for a KillaFergus?

Hoffy