

The Flat, Fat, Bald Tyre Trophy

Contributed by Coach
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Unfortunately for the rest of you this is a two horse race, two mates going head to head for the Flat, Fat, Bald Tyre Trophy. This trophy is a worn out old tyre, however, may just be in better condition than us these days. The trophy is up for grabs whenever we get a chance to compete against each other. I must admit it's been a long time since I got my hands on the old piece of rubber but every dog has its day.

The day was round 4 of the Sunshine Series Cross Country event at Mt Crosby. We thought it might be a good idea to stop feeling sorry for ourselves due to the usual winter coughs and colds and do a few laps and hopefully collect a couple of points for our club along the way. The day started out a bit different from most races as we actually got there in time to do a practice lap! The practice lap showed us how unfit and how hard the course was going to be, not a lot of easy riding to be had.

In all honesty we don't get to compete for this converted award very often. Roger being more road oriented and myself being more mountain bike focused. Having said that the last time I won this it was in a road race (I have to fess up that it was a handicap event and my group managed to stay away) and then lost it not long after in a mountain bike race where he absolutely destroyed me.

On the start line no mention had been made of the trophy. Both of us well off our best and not wanting to put anything on the line. As soon as the starter sent our group off, we were relegated to collecting dust at the back of the pack. Roger decided to put his nose in front of me which left me in absolute motherless last. We have ridden many many miles together and his body language suggested he didn't really want to hang behind. On the first climb it appeared that the pact was going to be broken and Rogers' competitive spirit was going to take over even if it killed him. The first climb had me stretched even further and my heart rate monitor showed I had very little room to move. Geez the race was on and I felt like if I managed just one lap of the 3 I would be doing alright.

The first section of the course was interesting in that it was open before heading into a number of climbing traverse sections that contained plenty of small technical challenges which slowed many riders up front. This enabled me to get back to within a bike length or two of Roger. Surprisingly we also managed to pass a couple of fellow back markers in our category. Once out of the traverse sections it was a final grind to the top of a grassy knoll. At this point we dropped off the back of the hill losing probably $\frac{3}{4}$ of the altitude gained on the first climb into what was now an open grassy cattle property. Back up we went to just below the high point only to again drop back down, but no where near as far as before. This open terrain on the second third of the course really suited Roger and he really extended his break.

A now smaller climb at the back of the course saw us heading to the last third of the course filled with rocks and the infamous snakes and ladders technical section. It was here that I felt comfortable and made up all the time lost. In fact I managed to get on the back of the next group of riders coming through which pulled me up to Roger. The lead rider of this group of six including me called track and Roger quite happily pulled over to see me go sailing past on the back of this group. At this point I could tell the old rubber trophy was going to be waiting at the finish for the stronger of the two of us as Roger put in a big effort to get on the back. We went across the line together at the end of the first lap knowing the race was on.

The second lap saw more of the same but the gaps did not get anywhere near as big this time. I was right on his wheel as soon as we got into the technical third of the course. A rider behind me called track, Roger pulled over and I rode past letting the rider behind go past on a section I did not have to slow down. Take no prisoners I say. This tactic proved decisive as I got through snakes and ladders in good time and around to the start finish with Roger still out of sight. This was it, live by the sword, die by the sword, it was all or nothing.

I worked hard to get to the top of the climb with a big gap still in tact and once I got to the back third I knew I could push through the technical part of the course in comfort. So much for an easy roll and the body wasted as I crossed the finish well into the top half of the field. I just knew Roger would be dreading crossing the line with me waiting for him. I also knew he would have already started plotting revenge!!

The Fat, Flat, Bald, Tyre Trophy is sitting in its rightful place in my garage. Along with the trophy comes the bragging rights. These rights last for one week and one week only. Don't you worry I have really pushed the limit on these as well.

Maybe your like me and don't get to see the pointy end of a race too often. Why not grab a mate and make a race within a race and see how much fun you can have with it. You may even need to put some handicap system in place. Our Fat, Flat, Bald, Tyre Trophy has made for some entertaining and memorable races

Thanks to the Kenmore crew for putting on a great race in what was a very interesting course which tested everyone.

Results Sunshine Series XC Round 4 – Mt Crosby