



The Big Loop Trial Hinchcliffe A & B - Ferny Glen, Qld July 2021

On July 10th and 11th, the fittingly named Big Loop Trial was hosted by SQTA and Logan River Trials Club in a joint effort to create an event a bit different to the usual event. This event was a long time in the making and we must go all the way back to the Easter Weekend of the 3rd and 4th of April when this event was first scheduled to happen. Unfortunately, an untimely covid lockdown meant the whole event had to be postponed and the date was reset to the 3rd and 4th of July. After a massive amount of work by many volunteers both times, for a second time the event was postponed due to a covid lockdown and some bad weather. The event was postponed again for 1 week to the second weekend in July.

After an enormous amount of hard work over several weekends, the property was finally prepared with 14 sections set in a variety of terrain. There were a number of brand new sections to add to this variety and would not be possible if we didn't have so many volunteers. So, I guess the message is, the more volunteers we have, the more variety of new sections can be offered.

The loop itself was quite a long scenic trail ride starting from the foothills of the B side then winding along the ridges around the back of the property and finishing adjacent to the bottom camping area on the A side. The sections were very challenging and thanks to a substantial dumping of rain on the Friday before the event, many of the sections and some parts of the loop ride were very slippery, making things even more difficult. The loop was so long it was about a 3-hour exercise to ride the first loop and complete all 14 sections along the way. Once everyone was familiar with the loop and sections the subsequent loops didn't take quite so long.

With most riders pre-registered and a handful of walk-ins on the day, we ended up with around 110 registered riders. It was good to see a big turnout of junior riders and they kept Andrew McDonald-Smith and his dedicated helpers very busy. Saturday, they ran a bit of a coaching and practice day with Sunday being a mini-loop trial for kids not wanting to do the long loop. The big loop riders were treated to two laps on Saturday and two laps on Sunday. Considering the numbers of riders, things flowed quite well and there weren't too many issues with congestion at the section starts. I seem to recall reporting that our last event at this property it was dry, powdery and dusty. This time round was the total opposite with plenty of mud and slippery rocks. After riding 56 sections there were some very dirty bikes in need of a good wash.

There were great prizes offered at this event via a raffle that every pre-registered rider had a free entry in. If you were lucky enough to be amongst the early winners, there were shirts, hats, gloves, some bike parts and some alcohol to choose from.

There were some very nice medallions up for grabs for the top three places getting in each division, with a separate junior class for division's 4, 6 and 7.

The scores were interesting with some riders seemingly handling the slippery conditions quite well while others didn't do quite so well. Hopefully everyone enjoyed themselves had something to talk about for a few days afterwards.

All divisions were well represented with divisions 4, 5 and 6 having some of the biggest fields we have had. The scores were generally a little higher than our typical events which is not surprising given the mix of mud and rocks. It was an accomplishment in itself for anyone that completed all four laps and rode every section. There were quite a 5's taken by choice rather than always being a failed attempt. Anyone who managed to finish in a place and receive a medallion for their efforts should be proud of themselves.



Saturday evening was available for free camping and it was good to see so many choosing to spend the night. It was a cool night but quite comfortable if you anywhere near a fire. Some of the campers were treated to some live music with Rob Austin once again getting his guitar and song book out to entertain us. There's not much better than an evening by the fire while being entertained by a talented musician, good work Rob, it's really appreciated.

Riding on Sunday was wrapped up by around 1.30pm with everyone chipping in to get the sections pulled in before having some free hotdogs to satisfy their appetite. Once everyone had settled after a feed, the presentations could get under way and the winners celebrated bringing the weekend to a close.

This event was a great success thanks to countless volunteers who mowed, whippersnipped and cleared the property then gave up their weekends to run tapes and place markers. A big thankyou to the presidents of both clubs in Harry van Dijk (SQTA) and Andrew McDonald-Smith (LRMTC) for doing a lot of organising behind the scenes to get this off the ground. We also thank everyone else who put their hand up to help out and share the load, it was a big effort from a lot of people. Last but not least a big thankyou to John and Linda for allowing us access to their beautiful property or events like this just wouldn't be possible.

We hope everyone had a great weekend and look forward to seeing many of you at coming events.

See you there!

