

Anarchy AR – Race Report for Wilderness Traverse 2018

So this year's goal was to complete the full course. In the past 3 WT's we have been short coursed; this year was going to be different.

The team consisted of three WT veterans Myself (Rob), Brady and Matt and a newbie to AR, Nathan. Our plan was simple: use straightline nav as far as practical going through or over any obstacles. During the planning we were very confident that we could hit the two cut offs and expected a fairly early finish. Little did we know what Bob had in store for us on the bikes.

The race started well, we hit the first checkpoint after the first swim and opted for the swims to the next CP's. After CP 3 we made the call to come off the ski trail and opt for the shorter tougher bushwhacking to the TA. This was tougher than we thought with some filthy swamps to cross. This decision cost us our SportIdent card, which we lost somewhere in the bush, and a 1 hour penalty.

We transitioned to the bikes pretty much on schedule and expected to cover the ground at an average of 10km per hour and be in the canoe transition at 6pm. We even debated the need for lights and I almost left mine behind. Bring on the ride from hell! I swear Bob confused the bike leg with the canoe leg; there was so much water. I'm pretty sure he's getting kickbacks from my local bike shop as the water and sand ate my drive chain!!

We had several tumbles, the funniest of which was Nathan who fell into a ditch and lay there inverted unable to unclip from his right pedal. As much as we tried we could not get him off the pedal so eventually pulled him and bike back upright as one. Turns out one of the cleat retaining bolts was missing. We were 30km into the ride, leaving us with the prospect of Nathan riding with one foot unclipped for the remainder. As we stood by the trail wondering what to do to make a temporary repair, a team pulled up and one of them miraculously had a set of replacement bolts that he very kindly donated. That is the spirit of AR and one of the reasons I keep coming back for more. The team that helped us may have been Sole Brothers but I can't be sure. So the ride took 9 hours - 3 hours longer than planned!

We made it out of the canoe transition at 21:24 so still had a shot at making the 0700 TA3 cutoff. The paddle was my favourite part of the race and Brady's nav was spot on. We only had a couple of delays finding portages but we set a good pace. We did take a detour past Pete's Place which left us with only 5 mins to make our transition and get onto the final hike. This is where the race went pear shaped for us. We got turned around trying to avoid the out of bounds areas and ended up way down to the east. We had forgotten about the Massasauga park map and the main map didn't give much detail. So once we were off track we couldn't make out any features to determine where we were. Eventually, tired and disappointed, we phoned Barb. She told us where we were but after 27 hours, the team was looking dangerously fatigued and we made the tough call to return to TA3.

So after coming so close this year, I am determined to finish this damned race next year. I'm not sure anyone else from my team will be coming back so I'll be looking for a team of experienced AR racers, preferably a team that has completed WT. If you are looking for someone to join your team let me know.