

Black Mountain Trail Race, 21.1km and 35km, 25 November 2018

Race director: Lorraine Lawson

The first page of this race report is nearly the same as the two previous years, but as I'm the author, I think that will be all good! Enjoy.

The Black Mountain Trail Race starts on the intersection of Black Mountain and Quaid Roads 26km northeast of Kuranda, Far North Queensland. The route mostly follows the historic Twin Bridges track in the Kuranda and Mowbray National Parks, within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The highlight of the event is the ankle deep crossing of Spring Creek at the 14km mark, with views of the dilapidated Twin Bridges. Back in the late 1800s, the Twin Bridges track formed part of the main access through to the Hodgkinson Goldfield and Herberton tin fields from Port Douglas. The completion of the Cairns to Mareeba railway in 1893 and the Cook Highway between Cairns and Mossman in 1933 reduced the importance this thoroughfare. As recent as the 1970s 4WD clubs used to drive over these bridges, but sadly, today the bridges are completely collapsed, with a few large logs and concrete slabs the only reminder of the historic importance of this track. Monsoonal flood waters destroyed what was left of the bridges a few years ago. Today the slightly undulating 18km Twin Bridges track provides an excluded trail in beautiful tropical rainforest for use by walkers, trail runners and mountain bikers. There are numerous log bridges that provide views of crystal clear shallow creeks, but it is only at the 12km mark that the runners can access creek water – if they choose to fill up as the event is entirely self-sufficient with no checkpoints or volunteers along the course.

The 21.1km competitors finished where the Twin Bridges track rejoins Black Mountain Road, two kilometres from the top of the infamous Bump Track.

There are a host of dangers that lurk in the rainforest for unsuspecting competitors. Runners are required to carry two compression bandages in case of snake bites. And this year again, a few of the runners spotted a few of the mean-looking red bellied black snakes (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*). These creatures are venomous and can give you a nasty bite. Although not deadly, the Wait-A-While or Lawyer Vine (*Calamus australis*) can potentially cause serious damage from the long thin spike-covered tendrils that hang over the track or grab you around the ankles from the forest floor. Seasoned trail runners in the region often come through unharmed, however those newer to trail running take some time to develop the knack of spotting the thin tendrils just in time to duck out of the way. There are also Stinging Trees (*Dendrocnide moroides*) in the area, and brushing up against it can inflict severe pain. Fortunately there were no injuries from stinging trees this year.

The tropical rainforest is also home to the endangered southern cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius johnsonii*), a flightless bird that can grow to 2 metres in height. But alas, no sightings of cassowaries were reported this year, although we have spotted them on previous occasions while running in the area. And there was some very fresh poo around, so they are out and about in the hot weather.

This event was cancelled in 2016 due to low entry numbers, but we've come back bigger and better in 2017 with the introduction of the 35km race to provide an extra challenge for those wanting to go further than the 21.1km. In 2016 nineteen competitors were on the start line of the race compared to 28 in 2017, and although entrant numbers were low only one week out from the event, we managed 27 entrants and 25 starters this year. Transport for the 21.1km competitors and a healthy lunch were provided. The 21.1km finish/35k check point had plenty of icy cold water, icy poles and some coke to keep the runners hydrated on a weekend that was predicted to be at 'heat wave' proportions.

Congratulations to Dynamic Running club members, Anthony Ralph (3:09:23) and Derek McDonagh (3.31.45) who took out first place and second placing in the 35km race. Anthony broke the record set at the inaugural event last year. Well done! Townsville visitor and bush-camper, Sam Heames, took out third place (3.39.21). Two male runners and one female pulled out of the 35 and finished up their run at the 21.1km. That left three ladies in the 35km, with first lady home being Dynamic Running club member, Catherine Coller (4.28.25) Also a new course record. Congratulations. Club member Jessica Proctor (5.12.44) was second and Jo van Gorp (5.33.15) third.

Gary Venz (1.56.11) came in nearly 30 minutes ahead of the next 21.1km competitor, Heath Eaves (2.27.49). Heath was very pleased his first 'trophy' awarded to him as the male winner of the FNQ Summer Trail Series this year. He was in fact the ONLY male still standing at the end of the three races, good work, Heath. Third male for the 21.1km was Rankin (2.30.40), who pulled out of the 35k after a fall and a twisted ankle slowed him down a bit.

Faith Atkins was the first female over the line for the 21.1km in a time of 2.32.17, followed by Deb Hales (2.39.06) and Sabbi Grossmann (2.45.26). Novice trail runner and doing her first 21.1km, Liz O'Conner was pleased to see the finish line. She lived up to her name of 'snake lady' by being one of only a few people to spot a snake on the trails today.

Our wonderful volunteers made this event possible: Anthony Ralph and Dave O'Brien on check in; Petra Beck and Clare Hopper at the 35km finish line; Stacey and Glen Longmore manning the 21.1km finish; and Jenni Jefferis, Eric Atkins and Larry Lawson out on the course – on foot, on bike, in 4WD respectively. Thanks to Dave O'Brien, Andrew Haigh, Shaun Muddock, Eric Atkins, Jenni Jefferis, Stacey Longmore, Derek McDonagh and Larry Lawson who provided transport today.

In terms of our series winners, it was not an easy task to appoint a winner in the females this year. By doing the longer distance, you automatically put yourself above the others on the day, but this year we had Faith doing the longer distance at Smithfield and Jessica doing the longer distance at Black Mountain. They both did the same number of laps at Atherton. We ended up looking at pace and the overall performance of each runner, and Faith Atkins was awarded the win for this year. Congratulations.

Current placings in the Summer Trail Series

Overall winner	Series contenders		Smithfield			Atherton			Black Mountain			
			Time	Distance	Placing	Time	Laps	Placing	Time	Distance	Placing	
1	Faith	Atkins	1.30.30	11km	3	2.13.49	2	2	2.32.17	n/a	21.1km	2
2	Jessica	Proctor	45.48	5.5km	5	2.48.00	2	4	2.44.49 (at checkpoint)	5.12.44	35km	1
3	Liz	O'Connor	1.13.46	8km	4	1.52.44	1	5	3.51.53	n/a	21.1km	3
1	Heath	Eaves	1.27.06	11km	1	1.06.58	1	1	2.27.49	n/a	21.1km	1

Results for Black Mountain Trail Race, 25 November, 2018

35km

Overall placing	Bib #	Name	Time	Time	Age Category	Age Category Placing
1	47	Anthony Ralph	1.47.41	3.09.23	M 40-49	1
2	616	Derek Mcdonagh	2.01.26	3.31.45	M 40-49	2
3	255	Sam Heames	1.57.04	3.39.21	M 30-39	1
4	18	David OBrien	2.12.39	3.58.05	M 60-69	1
5	271	Andrew Haigh	2.09.55	4.11.36	M 40-49	3
6	81	Catherine Coller	2.30.47	4.28.25	Female	1
7	D4	Shaun Muddock	2.40.57	4.48.35	M 40-49	4
8	376	Jess Proctor	2.44.49	5.12.44	Female	2
9	269	Markus Stuwe	2.50.21	5.08.05	M 50-59	1
10	232	Jo Van Gorp	3.10.38	5.33.15	Female	3
11	62	David Elms	3.10.16	5.33.16	M 50-59	2
		Natasha Barker	DNS		F 40-49	
		Laura Whenmouth	DNS		F 30-39	

21km

Overall placing	Bib #	Name	Time	Age Category	Age Category Placing	Note
1	362	Gary Venz	1.56.11	M 40-49	1	
2	227	Heath Eaves	2.27.49	M 40-49	2	
3	283	Rankin Salinas	2.30.40	M 18-29	1	Dropped down from 35
4	261	Darryl Stewart	2.31.57	M 40-49	3	
5	275	Faith Atkins	2.32.17	F 50-59	1	
6	286	Deborah Hales	2.39.06	F 50-59	2	
7	220	Gareth Jones	2.44.12	M 30-39	1	Dropped down from 35
8	253	Sabbi Grossmann	2.45.26	F 30-39	1	
9	267	Eve Stuwe	2.54.06	F 50-59	3	Dropped down from 35
10	285	Alarna Hodges	3.33.32	F 30-39	2	
11	264	Paul Venz	3.45.26	M 40-49	4	
12	282	Leith Wallace	3.45.26	F 60-69	1	
13	234	Liz O'Connor	3.51.53	F 50-59	4	
	69	Stacey Longmore	DNF	F 30-39		