

Ray in saddle for endurance race tilt

TOWNSVILLE City Council sporting enthusiast, Cr Ray Gartrell, is currently in training for an off-road endurance mountain bike race, the Mike Carney Hotrock 8 Hour.

Next month Cr Gartrell will don the lycra and join around 500 other riders as they take part in the annual ride, a 12km course at Lake Ross on Sunday, June 19.

The aim of the event is to complete as many laps as you can around the course within eight hours, either in a team or individually.

Cr Gartrell will race in a team of three, the Advancing Amigos, and will be joined by Andrew Vann, Deputy Vice Chancellor at James Cook University and Bruce Macdonald, Managing Editor of the *Townsville Sun*.

"I'm looking forward to completing the race faithfully," Cr Gartrell said.

"I've been interested in bike riding for a while now and then this opportunity came up so I grabbed it."

Cr Gartrell said he has been getting a few miles up on his legs and he has enjoyed riding around his local area.

"When I am riding I get to look at my local issues and identify things that are happening. I also get to talk to people as I ride around and see what is going on," he said.

Haydn Tilley, the president of the Townsville Rockwheelers Mountain Bike Club has donated his time to Cr Gartrell in the lead up to the event giving him a six week training program starting with a ride every other day for

up to an hour.

"Ray's previous outdoor exploits have been more of the 'waving willow' kind, a cricketer of some note in his youth," Haydn said.

"Ray will be using a whole new set of muscles for this adventure, consequently he will need to do some training to get his body in shape for this new challenge."

Haydn said the other most important tip that other new riders should follow is to rest every other day.

"Ray's body needs time to adjust. Lots of water and legs up when possible to allow him to be fresh for his next session," he said.

"Over the next six weeks the efforts will get more intense, so he should enjoy these gentle sessions while they last."

Meanwhile for those wanting a little extra training, current World 44 hour women's champion, Jess Douglas, will be flying up from Victoria to participate and hold master classes prior to the event.

The Hotrock 8 Hour commenced in 2008 as an off-road endurance mountain bike race for riders of all ages and skills levels and raises much needed funds for the Rural Fire Services in Paluma and Waterfall Creek.

You can follow Ray's preparations in the weeks ahead.

— KATRINA HINSCHEN



KEEN bike rider Cr Ray Gartrell, is in training for an off-road endurance mountain bike relay race

Photo: DARREN HILDER YKS13095

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