

Ray toughens up for his 8 Hour tilt

Making Tracks

with Ray Gartrell



MOUNTAIN biking novice and Townsville City councillor, Ray Gartrell, continues his build-up to the Hot Rock 8 Hour event on June 19. Some good news, he managed to stay on his bike in Week Three of his training program.

IN week three I have struggled.

I walked Castle Hill with my wife Linda last Tuesday morning and then did a ride late the same day from Rowes Bay to Pallarenda and return with Wild Hog Bruce Macdonald (*Townsville Sun* editor).

Going out on my loaner bike from Top Brand Cycles was fine but pedalling back into a gale I thought the ride was never going to end.

That probably explains why there were so many kite surfers taking advantage of the wind.

Wild Hog Macca had packed his bike in the back of his ute and was half way through his second drink by the time I staggered into base camp.

I had hit the wall, I was "bonked". Only excuse was that the tyres on my bike were fairly flat, or maybe the sting had gone out of the legs from the hill walk, lack of water and the gears were playing up. Is that enough excuses, I can make more up. I felt like a Clydesdale, the legs where heavy which continued for the entire week.

I took on Scrub Python and Easy Street (mountain bike tracks) on the weekend and did not have a fall. Was good for the fitness but being a novice you really need to focus to ensure a safe return.

My feet are sore I have tape on two toe nails and another is brown/black in colour.

I am looking forward to seeing supreme athlete Jessica Douglas in action at the Hot Rock 8 Hour and wonder how often she has been to nirvana. Google Jess who is the 2010 World 24 Hour Solo Champion.

For those unfamiliar with my newly acquired mountain biking lingo nirvana means a state of being in absolute control and totally in tune with your bike and the word bonk is a term for cycling fatigue, presumably derived from the original meaning "to hit" and dates back at least half a century.

I'm still yet to ride the 12km course which will be the venue for the Hot Rock 8 Hour on June 19 but Townsville Rockwheelers Club president Haydn Tilley said he would arrange a session in the next week or two. I will keep you posted.