

Ride 525 Report – 29 July 2017

American Independence Day Ride!

Hares: Ditch, Wet Beaver and Bob Graf

A contingency of two dozen of the faithful assembled at MOE Dairy Farm Outdoor Adventure Learning Centre in the calm after the storm. For only hours earlier, heavy rains had blanketed the area and wreaked havoc. This would prove to have dire consequences for those of us who had come together that morning to celebrate not only the virtues of mountain biking, but America's Independence Day. Would we be victorious in having a flawless outing, or would we be 'trumped?' We would know the answer to this question a few short hours after the usual 10am flag-off.

The Hares had some substantial help from Dirtrraction in their efforts to lay a trail, because nearly all of it meandered through classic mountain bike terrain – starting from the beloved trails of Bukit Timah Nature Preserve and continuing on to Track 15. What could possibly go wrong with such time-honoured and tested terrain?

The early-morning rains had created a perfect storm for disaster, as stubborn Hashers man-handled their cycles up soft muddy embankments, over slippery roots, and down slopes of medium to large-sized boulders that sent many a man and woman amongst us to the ground. Stealing a page from the Ketam Kings playbook, the Hares brought us through the most challenging parts of Bukit Timah that are difficult even in dry weather. Still slick from the rain, the rocky terrain was enough to swallow a 26" hardtail like mine, and the lycra-clad poseurs, risk-takers and wannabees among us paid the ultimate price, as we would later see first-hand at the Circle to follow.

Having completed the Bukit Timah portion of the ride within the first half-hour, we made our way towards Chestnut, where Bob Graf was laying-in-wait like a rogue traffic cop. Taking his cues from Donald Trump, Bob was the gatekeeper who dictated who and who couldn't pass into the hallowed gates of Chestnut Nature Park (South) to do the always-enjoyable 1.6km mountain bike trail: men could enter freely, but woe to Spa Barbie who was told to bypass that and was barred admission. Being male, I was allowed to do a lap of this meandering course before continuing on to the lovely path that eventually becomes Track 15.

The challenge at this stage was no longer the terrain, but avoiding the numerous cyclists who were coming the other way. A head-on collision would be worse than Richie Porte's disastrous crash at the Tour de France. Luckily, the group avoided any such fate and we managed to continue northwards unscathed.

Prevailing weather conditions made it a challenge for the Hares, as the paper and markings they had laid the day before had dissolved in the rain. This made it a challenge for the riders to stay on course. As Fat Crashing Bastard remarked at the Circle, if you laid everyone's GPS maps on top of one another, none of the trails we rode would line up. As for myself, I eventually emerged to a checkpoint below the BKE, where a circle check written on a vertical concrete beam was broken and showed arrows bearing to the right. However, I was unable to see further marks after that and tried riding down the green artery within eyeshot of the BKE underpass. Some toilet paper wrapped around a tree seemed to confirm my suspicions that I had found the trail – but apparently this was left-over from a previous Hash. After a bit of navigating a dead end at the bottom of a grassy slope, I backtracked and went around a large cyclone fence, which turned out to be the rear side of Mandai Camp II. I found a small fire road that brought me out to Mandai Road, and from there I opted to head to the start point in the most direct way possible – via Mandai Road to Woodlands / Upper Bukit Timah Road. Upon arriving at the cooler and cluster of cyclists some 5km later, Ditch said, "You're coming in from that way?" Cyclists made their way back one by one – sometimes from different directions – and finally the Circle was called to order by Copy Cat.

The American Hares – Ditch, Wet Beaver and Bob Graf - were summoned forward for the customary down-down and a note:

Here's to the Hares, they're true blue...! Our heroes faced insurmountable odds and braved the elements in delivering two hours of adrenaline-packed cycling to riders of every level, and they deserve a collective round of applause. Their route was perhaps the most difficult terrain that we have encountered in 2017, as the rain-soaked terrain claimed the highest number of casualties this year and made the Circle look like a military field hospital.

We had a few first-time cyclists joining us, and we look forward to seeing them again for future rides. Clara has a distinct advantage – genetically and in terms of coaching – of being the daughter and protégée of Coq Up, a notorious FRB among us. When asked by Copy Cat if she would be back, she sheepishly looked at her father for reassurance before replying in the affirmative. No doubt Clara will soon be a regular...

Marc from Germany then gave us his life story when asked for a brief introduction. He's been in Singapore for 10 years, has one child, and Marc was ready to give us his full vital statistics before Copy Cat cut to the chase with a simple "Will you be back?" "Yes," Marc answered with a smile.

Charles (not Chuck), then stepped forward to tell us that he's been in Singapore for four years – via Dubai – but didn't know that SBH existed until today. Better late than never, they always say. When Copy Cat asked if he might be addressed as Sir Charles, our virgin rider quipped, "Could be."

The COD's, or those who suffered a Crash of the Day, were then called in for a note and a shoulder to cry on. Clara stepped forward, injured but smiling, followed by Bob Graf, who looked like the walking wounded as he hobbled in with a bandaged ankle.

Goes Both Ways wasn't injured but her saddle certainly was, as this Amazon warrior rendered her saddle dead and useless. I've never seen a saddle break before, but leave it to Goes Both Ways to manage to do so.

No Good was called in for taking a spill, and Wet Beaver hobbled in with perhaps the worst injury of all, for on the previous day she re-broke her toe. As if breaking her toe once wasn't enough, Wet Beaver suffered this agony twice. Having had a hairline fracture once when I dropped a 20kg weight on my toe, I can attest to the fact that it is a pain like no other.

And the choir sang: *Here's to the COD's, they're true blue, they are bastards through and through...*

Mechanicals, you ask? Yes, there were a few who had them today, but thankfully not the Scribe for once. Goes Both Ways came in for her broken saddle (too bad she has a Hash name already, otherwise Broken Saddle would be a good one). Old Worn Stump, who proudly chooses to ride an aluminum frame with tube tires, had not one but two punctures. No doubt the rocky descents are the culprit for many a flat tire.

Clara stepped forward once again for a mechanical issue, downing another 100 Plus for her ordeal.

Here's to the mechanics, they're true blue...

Our next ride will be an epic ride in Malaysia helmed by Too Easy, Old Worn Stump, and FCB. FCB, who could sell a refrigerator to an Eskimo, rattled off the selling points of the ride: 28-29 km of trail riding, of which 22km is real single track (he emphasized the word real). The rest is slightly wider than that, but not much. Only ½ kilometer of the entire ride will be on the road. The ride will get underway on Sunday, July 30th. Note the special 9:30am start time, as this will be a 2.5 hour ride, according to the Hares.

Goes Both Ways and Copy Cat have done a mammoth job of organizing an SBH outing to the Cape to Cape MTB Race in Australia, to take place this October. Copy Cat, in usual Hash mismanagement style, declared "If you have any dietary requirements, send them through and we will completely ignore

them.” The trip is nearly at full capacity as of this writing, and any queries can be directed to Goes Both Ways.

Fat Stuck Bastard brought in Whorenet and Spa Barbie to dramatically recount how medical triage was administered to Whorenet during the ride. Upon seeing her husband in distress, did she rush to him offering pain relief? No, Spa Barbie merely lifted her bike and turned away, exclaiming “I cannot see this!” before moving some meters away. “But I waited!” countered Nurse Agnes. *Why was she born so beautiful, why was she born at all...?*

Fat Crashing Bastard then called in Bob Graf for bullying a female rider, Spa Barbie, by forbidding her to enter a circuit. For displaying such Trump-like behavior, *He ought to be publicly pissed on, he ought to be bloody well shot, he ought to be nailed to the sh%thouse, and left there to fester and rot.*

Copy Cat then brought the Circle to a close and we made our way to Blooie’s Roadhouse to nurse our wounds and recuperate with cold beer, warm food and spirited conversation.

Until the next ride, on on!

Scribed by: Knobby Boy Scout

