

MTN Tour of Legends -You're never alone.. Yes.

Day 1- Sand surfing

Distance 53.4Km, 500m Ascent

We arrived at 7.20pm Thursday evening, had run late from work, Joburg traffic and a young panic thinking we were lost on this gravel road to which Jamo Mamba confirmed we were on the right route.

Thabo Mamatshele, a legend in his own, asked if I could ride the MTN Tour of Legends with him, back flips and a young excitable scream landed me an entry to this prestigious race.

Delicious supper, great company, morning and in a little we were off, if anything I must mention how absolutely relaxed the start line was, chirps, mad laughs, Owen a legend in his own and the great realization that all these people around me, be it that I'd met them at a random race or an out ride somewhere, we all remembered each other and on route, you talk nonsense that auto deems you a friendship status of sorts, we're all a bunch of crazies, crazy passionate about this sport and we meet often, no longer strangers at the start line, the finish line, the beer after an awesome ride and this was to prove true in the next 50 odd Km of this beautiful land in this Legend resort.

The day was beautiful.. it was crazy beautiful.. I remember the site of the dam... breath taking.. unreal.. I'd woken on a Friday.. to these mtb'ers that I love soo and a morning ride on my gorgeous Pinarello steed.. is this not life we asked as we sat while waiting for the ferries of sorts that were carrying cyclists across the dam with Coen and Ralph.. bean bags, sunshine, dates and a young wait, more beautiful riding after our dam crossing, a fun rocky climb, giraffe, buck, more sand, yip sand, amazing single track and we were home.

Today reminded me of why I love this sport.. my heart was at peace, in the time I've been riding I've always tried to find self on the bike, panicked about my pedal stroke, if I was sitting properly, if I was powering from the correct place if if if... and today was the most gratuitous I've ever been.. no worrying about anything but the pure appreciation of being on your bike in this beautiful place, T and I have always ridden well, and today was just another day we got to enjoy in this passion that we love soo, my bike and I's love affair is ridiculous.. a happy finish, a beer.. yes.. a beer.. loved it!

Day 2 – MTB Day Proper!

Distance 50.8Km, 960m Ascent

Today had been rumoured to be quite a tough day in the saddle, the mighty yellow wood climb the defining bit of the day.. Apparently the descent back down Yellow wood was a crazy too...

We took off at 8.30am, 7km of flat-ish fast trails, sand has been the highlight every day, just sand surfing and having fun, and before we knew it, the bikes and legs felt heavy and we'd touched on the unknown, it was one hell of a climb, as it got steeper more people dismounted, and like cattle, head down, pushing self and bike up this ... ridiculous climb.. I have such respect for those who rode to the top, that's just talent on another level! At one point the climb got so steep I and my steed were 2seconds from rolling all the way back down as I tried to grasp the grass on the side to keep from slipping and sliding to the bottom, this is true.. and as luck would have it, this was captured on

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GoPro, sigh, what a toughie! I was reminded of the breaking and mending that sometimes happens on the bike.. the breaking and mending that builds a stronger you, you're never the same after something like that, it was gruelling.. I had moments when I didn't want to anymore, unsure if I could, the small voice inside that reminds you 'you can'.. everyone always asks at the end of your race what your time was, I've never thought that bit important, but my question would be, did you get to the top? Whether you rode it or walked it, it was hella tough.. the sweat on the concrete still so fresh was a constant reminder that we had all suffered on that climb!

The day got crazy amazing from there.. the route was pure art! An exciting rocky climb, to uphill single track with rocks and all sorts that spins my world around! Moments when my steed and I play as I pirouette in technical bits! Love it! Got to the 2nd water point that came with a compulsory stop to take a picture with your partner and take in the view and just the whole experience from up top, we were then taken through a young trek as we all carried our bikes over rocks, what awesomeness! More beautiful technical single track, gorgeous downhills while sand surfing and before I knew it, we were heading back home! Coming down that yellow wood climb was gorgeously thrilling! Couldn't believe we had come up it, it was soo steep! Brakes, butterflies in tummy and calm got me safely down to the bottom, a little more sand surfing, climbs, and home!

The Epic Cycle Shop crew was just amazing, each and every bike was washed and serviced daily, the most awesome service with a smile! My steed felt and sounded amazing after each service! Thank you!

Day 3- Bidding farewell

Distance 37.7Km, 366m Ascent

This was a nice short day for all, considering a few of us had gotten a little excitable at the Shebeen the evening before, my morning started with 2 USN Spikes, breakkies and we were off.

More sand, I'm certain we all left as professional sand surfers! Lovely relaxed day on the bike, gorgeous route and scenery as the game rangers rode with us on bikes and parked at all points they thought there could be danger with the Big 5 roaming free, apparently the lions had been out hunting the night before... this definitely would rate as one of my best races yet, it's rare you ever hear anyone having ridden in such beauty, with the big 5 open to feast at any time! Yes, and before we knew it, we were home!

Another massive well done to the Advendurance team for running such a well-oiled weekend, an amazingly enjoyable route, with just enough of everything, for everyone to enjoy, MTN sure knows how to spoil cyclists as we were in constant awe of the beauty that surrounded this Legend Resort. We got the most beautiful medals and finisher tops, I'm so privileged to have been able to ride this race with my T, Thabo 'Touch' Mamatshela, happiness is always on the bike!!

Someone said on Saturday, 'no one need ask if you enjoy riding your bike, its written all over your face and just how you ride your bike'.. I loved that, the Pinarello and I definitely have had fun, and this weekend was no different, Coen always said 'hello Princess' when he came past on route with his partner Ralph, with that, I've finally decided on a name for my Dogma, she shall be called Princess, yes, fitting indeed 😊 Suunto #Ambit says 40hrs recovery time, I must be getting fitter somehow! Yay!

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