

Departure from the recovery lounge by Peter Lovell

After a slow start into my return from injury with an unimpressive No Shows ride and a failed BPB last Saturday, I set out with renewed confidence to tackle the Goat Track Gambol, despite its promise of some brutal climbing. Although I managed to complete only half the ride, I'm glad I gave it a go.

After leaving Anzac Park I quickly slipped to the back of the pack and was further slowed by the Mt Coot-tha Ramp where I lost sight of the tail-enders. But on Simpson's Rd I was joined by relative newbie, Ken, who followed me to Tramway Street and beyond. However the Settlement Rd climbs had already knocked the wind out of my sails and thankfully Ken left me on Lanita Trail just as I was about to warn him that he may not make the time cuts if he hung with me. I don't know how he got on but I expect he made it home.

So I continued alone. I found Mt Glorious Rd a bit bone-shaking and wasn't looking forward to the Goat Track, but, though it was tough, I was pleasantly surprised by its good condition. At Mt Glorious Rd it was a relief to get onto smooth bitumen although the initial climb was tough. Then the roller coasters inspired me with a new (false) sense of security. That soon evaporated as I realised that each delicious descent meant extra painful climbing.

Then I met another serious obstacle, red light at the section of roadwork. Still red as I approached, I was certain I would not be able to do a hill start so I pulled out past the line of cars and motorbikes toward a flatter shoulder on opposite side where I might be more like to start from. Anyway as I approached the barrier I saw that the construction side of the barrier was a good solid surface. So with just enough momentum I did the naughty thing and went through the barrier feeling the ire of the vehicles left at the red light. Another random cyclist followed me and I was reassured by his praise, "Wow, brilliant idea, mate!". If I had waited for green light I would've been in for a long walk up that section.

That wasn't the last of it though. In steep section 2 k from the village I thought I was in small ring and ran out of steam (and gears) and had to get off to walk, only to find I was in the big one. Unable to start, I had to walk it up a few hundred metres to next crest.

Finally I made it to the village and cafe with zero minutes to spare (9:32am), quickly got my brevet signed and decided I didn't have time to stop.

So theoretically it should have been all downhill from there, but we all know that's not true. So a couple of the hills still beat me and I was reduced to walk bike up a bit.



On the real descent I was so delighted I came into the first bend a bit hot but after that one I resorted to braking early and it was fun until I got a front flat on the final descent. At that point I may have called the SAG wife, but luckily I had no signal. Anyway after examining tyre I couldn't find the cause so I chose to patch tube (no good wasting a precious spare if the cause was unknown and might blow again as I start riding off!). Patch was successful and still working when examined Sunday.

Lost another 20 precious minutes, but headed off towards Fernvale with image of a pie in my head. Was going pretty well, but failing to make up any time. Some significant hills were eating any gains and the closer I got to Fernvale the further it seemed. I got half way up the hill to Splityard Ck Dam and again had walk it up to crest. Some nice roller coasters from there to Brisbane Valley Highway, but last few k's to Fernvale were brutal.

Approaching Fernvale, I still had the thought that I could sail through and have a pie at Marburg and still make the cut, but the pull of the Fernvale Bakery Pie 🥧 was too strong. Then as I waited at the crowded counter I saw my chances slipping away.



The pie was bigger than I remembered and it took too long to eat, and by the time I was again rolling I had 7 minutes to reach Marburg and I arrived at the right turn at 13:50, already 20 minutes late. The sign said Marburg 11k to the right and Ipswich 21k to the left, so I sent Tara my resignation notice and took the easy left turn to the Switch, though not quite so easy as I got another flat approaching Warego Hwy. Made it to Ipswich and caught train to Milton and ride the last 1k home thru Suncorp Stadium.

In conclusion I have to say 'I ride my horse to the old town road, ride till I cain't no more ...'