

CYCLO CROSS ENDURO

What a great weekend! Headed down to south devon mid afternoon on Saturday to camp the night before the race, and also to watch the 'live more lectures' endurancelife were running for evening entertainment. They had 7 speakers talking about various things from cycling around the world, to how the body copes with exercise in extreme environments, was very informative, entertaining and inspiring! All held inside a triple tipi.

So onto Sunday and the race. It was my first race in a while, and my first ever cyclo cross race- for those of you that don't know, a cyclo cross is basically a road bike with knobbly tyres and 2 sets of brakes. I don't have one of those lovely bikes, so had to make do with my slightly too old mountain bike!

The race consisted of a 5km race out on pretty fast forest trail, then as many loops as possible around a 5km marked area in the time frame. I was doing the 2 hour enduro, so had 1hour 45 mins to get in as many laps as possible, before the final lap and then a 5 km stretch back to finish! Sounds fairly straight forward I hear you say!! Well the loop began with at least a mile muddy slog up hill, getting off twice to climb with bike over fallen trees, some very tight rutted down hill single track, followed by a fairly smooth climb back up, a chance to get some fuel in at this point! Then an incredibly muddy, steep switchback track that descended down to the estuary! Fortunately the tide was out for the next section- through a knee deep stream, across the very muddy estuary, through a ditch, over a section so muddy was quicker and easier to run with the bike than try and ride it, then into another ditch, which was pretty challenging to get out of, up some very steep steps, over a narrow bridge, to dib the electronic timer and start the lap all over again!!!! Believe it or not, it's the type of race I love!!!

I Managed to get in 5 laps, they got harder each time as the more people that went through, the more churned up the course became. Then just when you think your on the easy stretch back, after winding through the forest for a while, you come across the estuary again! This time, the tide wasn't out as far, I had to wade through waist deep water, trying to carry my bike! A lovely long uphill section to finish. I came in first female with a time of 2hrs 28mins, and estimated I did about 40km!

Was a fab race and I really enjoyed it. My first race in a while and a great one to start my mostly off road season of racing this year!!