

Mud, Sweat and Gears

2015

Sport Women Race report

Emily Q

Round 2, Carver Barracks

Carver Barracks!!!! New to this MSG racing, I must admit the only things I'd heard about this place involved a big scary bomb hole and a broken collar bone. Cue panic I really didn't know what to expect but assumed I'd be attempting stuff completely out of my comfort zone. So filled with apprehension of the unknown, we pulled up to the venue where to be honest my first thoughts were, how the hell does a bomb hole exist in a place so god damn flat? Seriously, you could see as far as the eye could and it just didn't seem possible.

How wrong was I! Lots of short sharp climbs, fast tarmac, rock gardens, jumps and really fast single track not to mention that A line drop off which consisted of an integrated ramp/log located right at the top of a sharp decent. This place was certainly going to make riders think!

Anyway with a warm up lap completed, it was time to race. Freezing cold (first time braving the lycra shorts look) and very nervous, I sat on the start line with the other women waiting for what felt like an age.



Finally, we were off and into the first corner where I seemed to get a pretty good start up with the elite women. Adrenalin pumping this continued into the second where i think i was still leading into the first climb and decent. Feeling pretty good, I managed to hold this position into the single track where the pace slowed round the countless tight turns and undulating terrain. I felt like I could ride faster so overtook to gain a few places in the overall field but still totally confused as to where I actually stood. Before I knew it we were at the first major A line, that drop off which is where I'm kicking myself now, my inner wimp surfaced and I opted for the slightly slower b line. Never mind, still I think just ahead of Roz Giles in second place, who now and again I caught glimpses of just behind I pushed on,

through the single track before getting to the tarmac. Once here, i rode as fast as possible to lengthen the lead. Worrying about what was going on behind, before i knew it, I could see Mel Paddington in front. I couldn't believe it, what's going on??? Managing to get on to her tail, we rode the single track back out onto the tarmac where i made a break around the start/finish fast corners and into the next single track section. Legs still good; I seemed to be buzzing and settled into a good rhythm for the next two laps enjoying it more and more.

Last lap, getting the bell I was still leading. Legs still going strong, I pushed on thinking the other women could catch me at any moment but as i looked behind there was no sign just a glimmer of Mel's bike a little way back. Nevertheless, this spurred me on as I know how strong other riders can finish and didn't want to take anything for granted. The last hills, descents and technical bits done, the finish was in sight. Just a little bit of tarmac to the line where I gave it one last push and there it was Race Win OMG!!! Couldn't quite believe it and am still buzzing. What an amazing feeling!

Awesome as this was, I also discovered my husband Paul won the Open Male category just after I crossed the finish. This, his first ever mtb race win and one to which he was as equally shocked at winning topped off a fabulous days racing. All in all, an amazing day. Brilliant course, wicked racing and wonderfully organised. Who would have thought.....Carver Barracks. Bring on those 2016 A-Lines!!!!!!