



Media Release 21/10/2009

'Sir Bart' Wins at Granite Gorge

It was sure to be only a matter of time before the great Dutchman Bart Brentjens stamped his winning seal on the Crocodile Trophy of 2009 and that occasion arrived promptly today when the former Olympic and World Champion made easy work of the second stage to Granite Gorge on Australia's Tropical Tableland.

The victory came at the end of a relatively short but nonetheless eventful 71 kilometre stage, that featured a climb to the 1200 metre summit of Mount Edith shortly after the race start.

That was where the fun began!



Bart Brentjens wins stage 2

The course for stage two needed to be cleared of fallen trees over the weekend after bushfires swept through the forest country. What riders and organisers hadn't counted on was an overnight downpour at the Lake Tinaroo campsite that brought down more trees over the track, blocking the path for riders after the first ten kilometres of climbing.

At the point that the race was re-started, five riders were in the hunt for stage honours after watching most of the peloton disappear from their rear view mirror on the lower slopes.

The select group was stacked with class and included Brentjens, race leader Urs Huber and ultra-tough Slovenian Jure Robic. Also showing their talent were Belgian Mike Mulkens and the youngest rider in the race, Josh Prete of the Tropical Tableland Discovery team who had scouted the stage several times in training.

The decision by organisers to re-instate the time gaps at the re-start, meant that the breakaway group still had every chance of success. By the summit of Mount Edith, it was down to a group of three riders in contention for the stage as Prete and Mulkens struggled to stay in touch.

With just 50 kilometres of undulating country roads remaining on the transitional stage before the Crocodile Trophy heads seriously outback, the finale came down to a technical sprint finish on dirt, which suited Brentjens just fine.

"I'm very happy it wasn't that difficult as yesterday, the last 10 kilometres was real fast with the wind at the back, a tailwind," Brentjens said.

"Most of the time in mountainbiking it's always hectic with some turns at the end, so I was leading the last k and took some risks in the corners very fast, and they couldn't catch me before the line."

As for the unique set of circumstances that led to the race re-start, the Dutchman enjoyed the experience in a place where mother nature serves up climate in extremes.

“It was fun to see all these guys have to clear the trees so we can pass,” Brentjens commented.

The stage result brought little change to the G.C., with Huber still leading Brentjens by just over 2 minutes.

Tropical Tablelanders Impress



The Tropical Tableland Discovery Team of Josh Prete, Steve Rankine and Isaac Tonello

The other major talking point from today's Crocodile Trophy stage was the performance of the local Tropical Tableland Discovery team which now leads the teams classification, after all three of its riders finished inside the top ten.

Their best performance was a fourth placing to the youngest cyclist in the field, 19 year old Tablelander Josh Prete, who is still finding it hard to believe he's in the same race as the likes of Bart Brentjens.

“Yeah it's good, they're definitely very talented, they just sit on the front riding on tempo and I'm just hanging on the back,” Prete said.

“It's awesome riding with them, especially riding with the Olympic champion.

The amateur team, cobbled together at the last minute for the Crocodile Trophy assault, has performed beyond expectation and put the visiting Europeans on notice.

It's a remarkable effort, given two of the team's riders Steve Rankine and Isaac Tonello work full-time and have been training at night on indoor trainers or under lights in the early hours of the morning to prepare for the race.

Monique Takes it Easy

With such a commanding lead in the women's race, Dutch cyclist Monique Zeldenrust decided today to leave some petrol in the tank, before the Crocodile Trophy heads towards the Outback.

Zeldenrust again showed she could ride at a level above her fellow competitors, but remains cautious, given the Trophy's brutal reputation for bringing even the best riders unstuck.

“I took it very easy today, relaxed and found a comfortable rhythm,” Zeldenrust said.

An interesting battle looms for the minor podium placings with Austrian Lisa Pleyer maintaining a solid lead over Australia's Abby McLennan, who has based her training in the Outback in recent months, to make sure she is ready for the extreme conditions.

(Ends)

For Further information:

John Flynn – Crocodile Trophy Event Marketing

+61 (0)410 665 464

+61 (0) 427 638 928 (Telstra Next G - On Course)

Office: +61 (0)740 370 574 Website: [http:// www.crocodile-trophy.com](http://www.crocodile-trophy.com)

The Crocodile Trophy is benefiting from funding under the Queensland Events Regional Development Program (QERDP). The QERDP is an investment program designed to extend the flow of economic and social benefits of events to regional Queensland.

A state-wide initiative, the program is committed to enhancing existing events in regional Queensland, as well as assisting in the establishment of new events.

Since the QERDP began in 2001, more than \$12.5 million has been invested in 600 regional events, an indicator of the important role these events play in their communities and wider Queensland.

(Ends)

Event Partners

