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## In this Newsletter

Welcome to the Northern Territory Rogaining Association's August 2015 newsletter. This edition contains interesting information on:

- 2015 Calendar
- Message from our President
- Behind the Scenes Happenings
- Event Wrap up : Reports, map, results and photos
- Letter to the Editor

## Message from Mike

It was a great turnout for Water Mania at Litchfield, beyond expectations. Talking to people afterwards, including teams that are seasoned, experienced, or some like me who always has ambition over reality but realises half way through we need an exit plan fast, it was a very challenging course with most teams planning to do a lot more controls than they actually found. It was very broken country in most parts and from a point of view of navigating through such country can definitely promote a little self-doubt, but you must and can rely on your instruments (compass and map) and that's probably what got our team through, particularly in the walk back in the dark! It was supposed to be a pleasant brightly moonlit cool dry season night in May and we ended up with overcast, humid and dark conditions. It was hard even to make out the horizon, let alone features and it rained as I fell flat a few times over the grass camouflaged geological sandstone ornaments that appeared from nowhere into the awaiting thorny vegetated means of pain that nature could inflict just to rub it in!



After returning, we sat in front of the campfire after the rain had eased, had a cold beverage together and conversed with some other teams and really enjoyed the moment. It's a



great sport that exercises mind and body with other like-minded people. It's nice to be around such individuals, not everyone would take to Rogaining as a hobby or a sport but those that do have certain qualities that make them endure, focus their minds whilst performing many other tasks, work collaboratively with their team, directing their weaknesses and sharpening their strengths, being competitive or non-competitive really doesn't matter, it's about doing the best you can and hopefully enjoying the experience along the way.

We certainly hope that if you were a newcomer that it didn't put you off as it is no doubt spectacular country with lovely water available in most areas. It was incredibly interesting from a bushwalking perspective, but as someone trying to get over it in a hurry it was hard bloody yards!

Thanks must go to Plaxy, Duncan, Emily, Paul, Vicki and a host of other people including accolades for Parks & Wildlife NT for being so acceptable with the whole process. If I have forgotten anyone I am sorry but you know who you are so take a bow.

President: Mike Dunbar

**Quote from a competitor:** *Thanks for running a brilliant event on the weekend. It was our first, and quite an experience. Even though when walking back for hours in the dark and repeatedly swearing 'never again', the following morning we were checking calendars for the next one. Well done!*

## Next Event:

### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> August 12 Hour Rogaine and 6 Hour Roving Event**

**When:** Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 12 noon – 12 midnight

**Where:** The MacKinlay River area, south of the Arnhem Highway

**What:** This area has been used in the past and inclusive of Greenant Creek and Sandy Creek Falls areas, with two small out of bounds locations. This offers a unique opportunity to view areas normally restricted to the public. There is plenty of water flowing, interesting rock formation and beautiful waterfalls. Stay the night, and for an additional \$5 enjoy a cooked breakfast.

**Details:** Further details, including entry forms, are available on the web site <http://nt.rogaine.asn.au/> Detailed information and course notes will be distributed on receipt of entry. Final entries close 26<sup>th</sup> August.

**Enquiries:** Jon Potter 0448 246 321

**Setter:** Jon Potter                      **Vetter:** Susi Bertei

Contact us via email [info@nt.rogaine.asn.au](mailto:info@nt.rogaine.asn.au) if you would like to take part but don't have a partner.



# Final Event for 2015

**21<sup>st</sup> November Metrogaine/Cyclogaine** – Howard Springs Area

Setter: Simon Saunders      Vetter: Ben Saunders

## Behind the Scenes:

- As some of you may have already found out we have a new website, if you haven't check it out. Many thanks go to Ben Saunders for all his work. We are still adding information but if there is anything you think we should add, let us know.  
[info@nt.rogaine.asn.au](mailto:info@nt.rogaine.asn.au)
- For the next event we have a revised registration form. This can be filled in saved as an excel sheet and emailed, it can also be printed, filled in, scanned and emailed or posted! The first option is the preferred as this removes the tedious job of transcribing the information from the registration form into the results format. It can now just be copied and pasted. We have Paul Potter to thanks for this mammoth change.
- Work has been done on fine tuning the "Newcomers Pack". This document has a stack of information not only for novices but everyone and will be available on the web. Thanks go to Susi Bertei for this work.
- Photos were taken of teams as they collected their Score Cards, if you are interested in getting a copy give Marj a call on 8985 6885. Also some photos will be put on facebook.

## Course Setters Report: (Plaxy Purich)

Waterfall Mania, what an enjoyable experience setting this course was. This was my first attempt at setting a Rogaine.

It was challenging most of the time, the terrain was tough but these challenges were softened with supportive friends and club members; and outstanding scenery, fresh cool drinking water and swimming holes to wallow in. The number of times I was completely taken by surprise, by the many enchanting and breathtaking places, and the kindness and assistance extended to me, was repeated.

For all those people who got lost, read on. Control, No. 81, knowing full well what the pit falls were approaching it from the top, very tricky, being drawn in a certain direction, knowing full well what the trap was, guess what? I fell into my own trap and missed the control site sending me off checking another creek system. In fact, I ended up checking out two creek systems before I found the spot. So the course challenged all of us.

My greatest thrill about setting this course was visiting each control site and finding an absolute gem under the circle on the map, be it a panoramic view, gorgeous water holes, a



**Pre-event Briefing**





waterfall or a geological feature I'd not seen before. As well as the path between some control sites, which had some beautiful flora, amazing rock features and varied terrain. I just loved it and those in the Parks and Wildlife office were so co-operative and supportive of this event. It was so easy working with them.

My greatest disappointment apart from the moon being covered with clouds was most teams didn't get to see or experience the course with all its gems on offer. To me it's like you only got to see half the movie! Despite practicing the principles of course setting from the "How to set a Rogaine" book, the course was too big for this 9 hour event, and probably better suited to a 12 hour. The fastest team only covered just over 40% of the course. What was suggested in the 'bible of rogaining', area vs. number of control sites etc., is not applicable to this area of Litchfield. This terrain was far more difficult to transverse and navigate, therefore slower, and I didn't take this into consideration.



To conclude, all teams did a great job, each team did the best they could on the day. The nature of the terrain was a tough course. To all those beginners, well done, it can be a rude shock at first, but the rewards are worth it when you attain the freedom of navigating and flowing around the course. While there were lost souls, blow-outs, blisters, sore bodies and frustration; what I repeatedly heard was, "I got lost, then we had a swim". The fact you got to enjoy your surroundings, is good enough for me to do this all again. Not many places in the top end can you just go for a swim without a croc.

### The Morning After

Lastly, thank you to Cathy, for assistance in the field; Emily and Trevor, for doing a quality job vetting the course; Marj, for helping with the map and coordinating the food; to Duncan, for attending to all things administrative; to the Saunders family, for shopping, carting and helping; to Mike for carting water and advertising; to Paul for helping set things up; to Jenni, Rohan and Tarquin Low Choy, for helping with admin, use of their trailer and preparing the food; and to Richard Luxton for the loan of his portaloo. Also, thank you to Parks and Wildlife, to Julie, Head Ranger and Ranger Andrew for their cooperation and support of this event. Thank you to all those who came early to help set and stayed late to clean up after the event.

### Winner's Report: (Lachlan Hallett)

Hash House -> punch card: Want to run the whole way on the road? Yeah!

Punch card -> 53: Wow, we are smashing everyone! ... The checkpoint should be just over that knoll. Nope. Hmm. Maybe it is over there. Nope ... ? ... aha! Hey Zoe & Mirjam were here 10 minutes ago and they were walking.

53 -> 52: OK, let's be a bit more careful, we will use that creek junction as an attack point and go from there. ... The control should be just on top of this knoll. Nope. Hmm. What about that knoll over there? ... Nope. I can just see something orange way over there.

52 -> 51: Well that didn't work too well, let's be super



### Score Card Collection



careful this time. We will take a bearing to that big creek bend and follow the creek up to the checkpoint. OK, the checkpoint should just behind that bush. Nope. Damm. ... ? ... It must be in the wrong spot. Let's skip it and head to 70. Hey we have just crossed two creeks on this plateau. Do you think they could be the ones east of 51?

Maybe, let's follow them for a bit. This looks promising. Yeah. Hey, there is the control! Wow, we really made a mess of that. Yep and the girls are now an hour ahead! They are going to smash us.

51 -> 70: Want to run along the road until that bend. Yep. ... It should be just behind that tree... Yes! So we do know how to navigate.

70 -> 81: OK, let's get to that road and start running! ... This is that shallow bend to the left. I take a careful bearing to the first big knoll. Yep, there is the big knoll. We will go past it to the next one and the checkpoint should be on top. There it is!

81->40: Ooh... this looks tricky. We could try just hitting it head on with a bearing. Hopefully we can pick up that gully. ... Is the ground starting to slope down now? I think so. Hey look, there is a gully. ...

Wow, look at the rock formations. That one looks like a camel. Ooh, and there is the checkpoint!

40 -> 50: Let's try hitting it head on with a bearing. We should pick up that steep bit halfway and that cliff should standout. ... This vegetation sucks! ... Hey, is that the girls? Yep, and there is the top of that cliff. The checkpoint must be 20-30 m upstream on a creek junction. ... I think it should be here on this small rockface. Let's try further up. ... Nope. Maybe we missed it on the other side of the creek. ... Nope. Hmm. I will try following the creek further up through that swampy bit. ... FOUND IT! That was a long 20 m?

50 -> 90: Let's follow the track down for a bit. It looks pretty rocky over there. Hey, it is the girls again! ... OK, that could be the creek going up the side of the hill? ... This is pretty steep! ... Where are you taking us? ... Do we have to climb up that? ... Whoops, I think we are too far south ... There it is, now to go back up that slope.

90 -> 80: Easy

80 -> 120: We've had to drop a fair bit. Shall we just drop all the way to the bottom and go around to the south. ... There is the road. How do we get down this embankment? It is pretty steep. ... We will come into 120 from the north - we should see a spur at the end of the ridge. ... I think that is the spur down there. Are you sure, it doesn't seem right. It looks right to me, come on... OK, I was wrong. Sorry! ... Aha, there it is.

120 -> 71: We should be able to pick up those walking tracks around Tolmer falls. ... Gee, it is getting a bit dark. ... Aha, there is the track. I am going to get out my torch. Hey, it is on! Wow it is pretty hot too. It must have been on a while... OK, let's fill up with some water here at this creek before taking a bearing to the south to hit that creek. It shouldn't be too hard. A bigger creek joins it near the checkpoint so we should be able to tell if we are far enough along the creek. ... This seems like a long way. ... Aha, there is the creek. I think we have gone too far. Let's start working our way back upstream. ... It might be just up there on that low hill ... nope ... maybe on top of that hill ... nope. Let's find that creek junction. It is pretty reedy in here. Nope, the creek is still wide. It must be further up. ... Nope, still too wide. ... It is very reedy here. Hey, the creek is narrow. We must be too far now. ... It should just up here ... Nope. Maybe over there. Nope. Bugger, my torch just died. ... Oh, there, it is back on now. ... We don't have heaps of time left, let's skip this control.

? -> 62 Hey there are lights over there. Maybe it is the girls. ... Now to cross the creek. Nope, go back, there is too much water. Nope, another way, it is too thick. ... Let's head, east and hit that creek. ... There is the creek, good, let's follow it along until that big bend. ... OK, now to the indistinct track on a bearing. Spotting this indistinct track is going to be pretty tricky in the dark. I can see those lights again, off to the south. They must be trying for 54. Wow they are keen. Well if it is the girls then they will beat us, especially if they found 71. ... Argh, my torch. You can borrow my backup torch, it isn't very bright. Well, it is brighter than mine at the moment! ... You had better go in front, I can't see much with this torch. ... Hey, was that the track? Um, maybe. Yes, wow, that was lucky, I only saw it out of the corner of my eye as we walked straight across it! ... I think we have lost the track? Maybe it is one of



those creek beds. ... Ah, there is the track again. ... Nope, we have lost it. We must be pretty close to the lost city. Lets just follow a compass bearing for 5 mins and hope for the best. ... Hey there are more lights over there. Yes, and reflectors too – it must be the path in the lost city! ... OK, this is the track bend, we will just duck in, get the checkpoint and be on our way. ... There is the knoll. ... No checkpoint ... Hmm. ... Could that be a knoll over there? Not sure. I think it is starting to rain. I left the fly off my tent. ... Yes, it is another knoll. Hey, and there is the checkpoint. Awesome, I might be able to fix up my tent before it gets too wet. Ha! There is a disposable camera! Quick lets take our photo. Hmm, no flash. Lets try that again with the flash turned on. OK, lets get going.

62 -> 62 We should be home in about 5 mins. That's good, we only have about 15 mins spare.

... Hey, I forgot to punch 62! I must of got distracted with the camera! Do you think we can make it there and back again? Maybe – we would have to run all of it. OK, lets go ... Gee this rain is getting heavy. Hmm. ... There is the checkpoint again. Want another photo? Ha Ha.

62 -> HH OK, we should get back in time, just but it will be tight. Gee the girls are cutting it fine if that was their lights back near 54. ... I think I can see the light of the hash house.



**Rather than puch the score card let's just take a photo of ourselves!!**

Summary: 11 checkpoints in 9 hours. Only one found after sunset. It was surprisinglytough out there! The map didn't show a lot of the knolls, bumps and dips which meant that getting the correct attack point was a bit hit and miss if it was a contour feature. That said, it was a very interesting rogaine with checkpoints on waterfalls, cool rock features, some good views and lots of variety.



**Overall Winners and Men's Open Winners: Lachlan & Andrew**



**Women's Open Winners (Overall 2<sup>nd</sup> Place): Mirjam & Zoe – just 30 points behind.**







### **Congratulations to all the Winners**



Thanks to Plaxy's idea of putting disposable cameras at 2 of the cheque points we have photos of a "happy" setter and happy competitors.





# Waterfall Mania

## Litchfield National Park

Scale 1:30 000  
1 km grid, orientated to grid north  
Contour Interval 5 m (mostly)

1:00 pm to 10:00 pm  
Saturday May 30, 2015



Course Planner: Plaxy & Cathy  
Vetters: Emily & Trevor  
Event Secretary: Duncan  
Catering: Marj

[www.nt.rogaine.asn.au](http://www.nt.rogaine.asn.au)

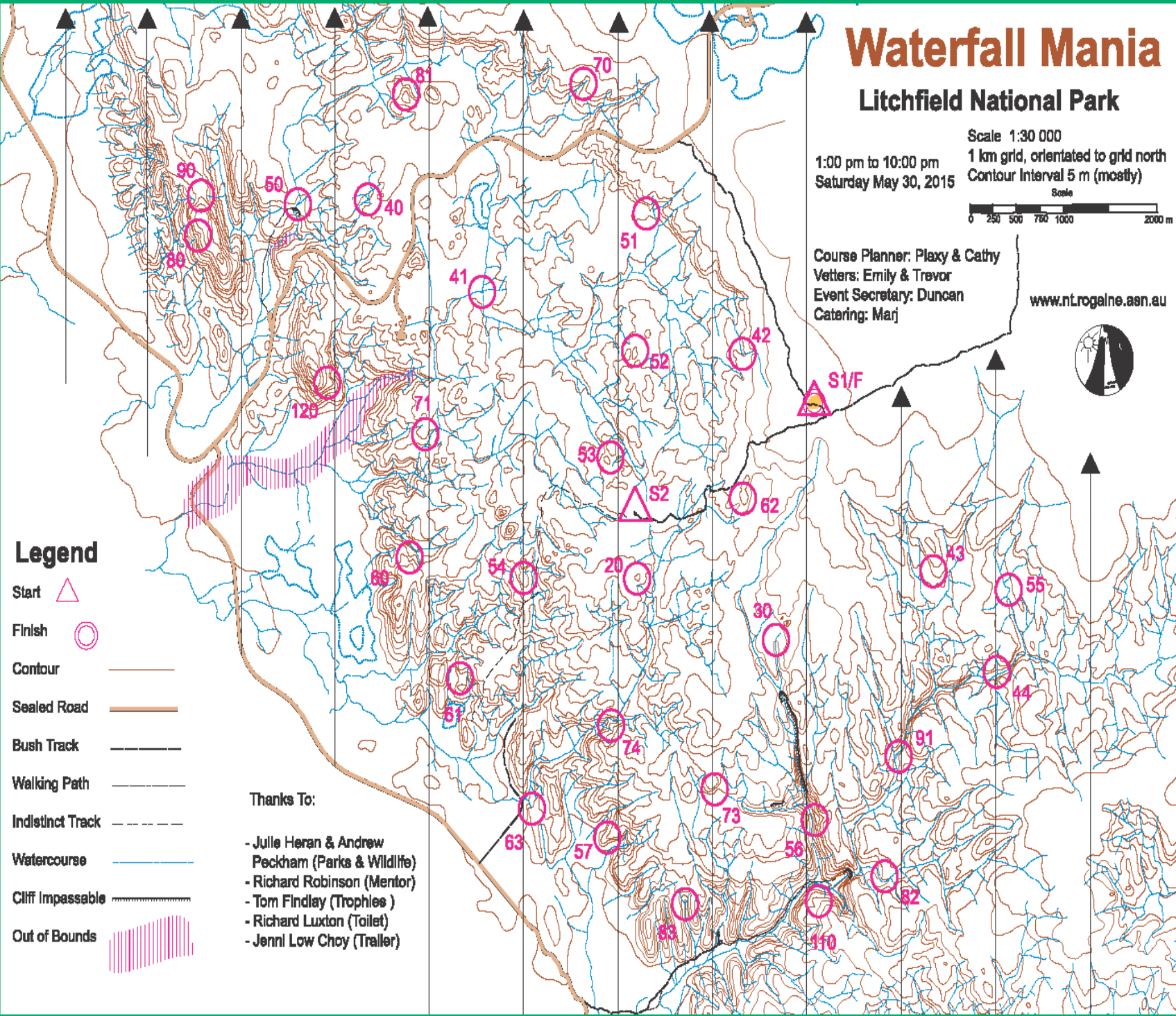


### Legend

- Start
- Finish
- Contour
- Sealed Road
- Bush Track
- Walking Path
- Indistinct Track
- Watercourse
- Cliff Impassable
- Out of Bounds

### Thanks To:

- Julie Heran & Andrew Peckham (Parks & Wildlife)
- Richard Robinson (Mentor)
- Tom Findlay (Trophies)
- Richard Luxton (Toilet)
- Jenni Low Choy (Trailer)









## Letter to the Editor: Feedback on Rogaining in the NT (Lachlan Hallett)

My rogaining partner and I have been asked to give a write-up from our experiences at the recent Litchfield rogaine - one of the downsides of performing well (comparatively) at an event! I managed to dodge the previous write-up request from the Adelaide River rogaine when Trevor (my partner for that rogaine) volunteered to write it. This time around I fully intended to do the write-up myself but I seemed to have gotten a bit side-tracked and ended up just writing about rogaining in general rather than about any specific event. Anyway, with that disclaimer out of the way here we go...

Rogaining is fun. At least, I think it is fun most of the time which is why I keep coming back. That said, I have done two which I didn't think were fun and there were some pretty long periods after each of these un-fun rogaines before I ventured back and did another one (neither of these two rogaines were in the NT). Some people seem to do rogaines for reasons other than "fun" (e.g. competitive, have trouble sleeping, masochists etc) so maybe these two rogaines did appeal to someone. Had either of those two un-fun rogaines been one of my first few then there is a pretty good chance that I would not have ever come back to the sport - this is something that we need to avoid if we want to build our membership, retain novices and get those novices confident enough to volunteer at events.

What I like about rogaines is the variety. Each one is different. Sure the terrain makes a huge difference as does the time of the year but probably the most significant variable is the course planner. Some course planners seem to be focussed on setting complex route choice problems with no obvious way of linking together a string of checkpoints. Others seem to just be focussed on having courses visiting "special" checkpoint locations which they had picked out. Some planners tend to place checkpoints on top of hills while others tend to choose only the most subtle of shallow gullies.

OK, so that is enough waffle. What I am trying to do here is give some background into why I go rogaining and, obliquely, what I think the future holds for rogaining in the NT. I find it amazing that the NT actually has a rogaine club. It requires a significant amount of volunteer hours to hold a single rogaine and yet NTRA has so few members which puts a lot of workload on just a few people. Fortunately for the NT these few people are quite keen and dedicated so the club has managed to survive through these last few lean years. As great as these volunteers are, this heavy workload on so few people doesn't seem sustainable in the longer term and I think that the NTRA needs to change its direction if it is to continue. I think that NTRA





needs to heavily focus on reducing workload on volunteers and focus on making events more suitable for novices competing at events.

## **Ways to reduce workload on volunteers & attract new volunteers:**

### *Have less checkpoints at events*

A well set rogaïne will have 1 or 2 teams visit *every* checkpoint (when teams have the same point score the faster team wins). Every checkpoint on a rogaïne is visited by volunteers 3 or 4 times – once by the course planner, once by the vetter (who can hang the checkpoint), and once by the person collecting the checkpoint so checkpoints should be used sparingly. So each time there is a checkpoint that is visited by less than about 4 teams it represents about 2-3 hours of wasted effort by volunteers.

### *Don't be fancy*

There is no need to use special software to set courses or to get maps drafted for the event. Some of the best rogaïnes that I have done have been on maps that have just been photocopies of topo maps joined together with sticky tape and marked up with a red pen. Using special software means that course planners need to learn how to use the software which discourages first time course planners whereas everyone knows how to use a pair of scissors and sticky tape.

### *Listen to the volunteers & don't forget to delegate*

Course planners have a lot of work to do in the lead up to an event. They should delegate as many task to the organiser as possible (e.g. sourcing maps, obtaining land owner permission, arranging volunteers etc). However it is a two-way street, if a course has a vetter (i.e. someone looking over the course and checking that the checkpoints are in the correct spot) then the course planner needs to take their advice. There is no point in a vetter visiting checkpoints unless the course planner is willing to remove or shift *all* checkpoints which the vetter thinks are dodgy, unfair or otherwise ambiguous. If a vetter has trouble when they are not rushed, tired or sore then competitors are bound to have huge difficulties when they are trying to find the checkpoints.

## **Ways to make rogaïnes more inviting for novices:**

### *Have checkpoints of different navigational ability near the start/finish*

Having say, 5 checkpoints of easy to moderate difficulty within 2 km of the start will enable teams new to rogaïning to be able to find checkpoints early on and get them used the map, scale, navigation etc. These checkpoints can have low point values if the course planner wants to encourage experienced teams to instead go further afield. Teams that struggle to find more than 1 or 2 checkpoints in the first few hours are likely to get demoralised and not come back to future events so course planners should aim to have set courses which *all* teams finish with at least 5 checkpoints and preferably more than 10.

### *Have a central Start/Finish location with multiple ways in and out*

Rogaïnes that allow a team to come and go from the start/finish without having to back track work well for novices as they are more likely to follow a course which involves looping back through the assembly area. I once did a rogaïne in SA where the start/finish was in the very corner of the map and you had to walk in and out on



the same track. It meant that any team not staying out for the full 24 hours had to walk along the 2 km track 4 times (out and back in the afternoon and then out and back in the following morning) which is pointless and frustrating. Also, put your start/finish somewhere distinct and easy to find. The last thing you want is teams lost in the dark not being able to find the finish.

### *Have more friendly formats*

Roving events where you can *any* spend X hours of a Y hour event on course are really well suited to novices (e.g. any 6 hours in a 12 hour event or any 12 hours in a 24 hour event). These enable novices to choose which part of a rogaine to avoid (e.g. the hottest part of the day or night time navigation or having to be up at 3 am etc). Some "roving" events set the hours which competitors have to be out on course but these are not novice friendly and should be not be used. Also, 18 hours in a 24 hour period is *not* novice friendly.

### *Keep it fair*

Courses need to be set fairly. If one part of a course is faster, slower, has more grass, has been burnt, has a dodgier map, is rockier underfoot etc then the competitors need to be told. Otherwise competitors who go one way will be penalised more than competitors who go another way. This information should be handed over with course notes as it is too late for competitors to modify plans during the briefing. On that note, there really should be no new information presented in the briefing, it should all be included in the course notes.

So to sum it all up, let's keep rogaining fun for both competitors and volunteers. Remember to keep some variety but not to go overboard while at the same time remembering to cater for novices. If you get this formula right then people will remember your events for years to come. I have rogained in 5 different states and in 3 different countries and yet my most enjoyable rogaine has been here in the NT at the Mount Bundey rogaine set by Wolfgang a few years ago. He got the balance almost spot on. Positive word of mouth after that event meant that the turnout at the next few events was higher than normal but unfortunately those following events were quite tough and most of the newcomers didn't last more than 1 or 2 more events before giving up on the sport.

At orienteering events I always say that you can tell if people enjoyed the course by seeing how many people are still around at the end of the event. If everyone has already gone home then it is a pretty good bet that people didn't enjoy it. Conversely, if people hang around after the event and offer to collect checkpoints then it usually means that people genuinely enjoyed it. The same thing is true for rogaines – next time have a look at how quickly people get back in their cars and drive home!

*The views in this letter do not necessarily reflect those of the NTRA.*

### **Comments from the Caterer:**

I would like very much to thank the many people who helped me in a variety of ways (buying food, chopping vegetables, and serving, etc) and in doing so enabled food to be supplied to far more people than was originally expected. I would also like to thank the Saunders family who do a lot of unseen work in the background. They kindly store the trailer, check and where necessary repair the controls, and in particular Thanks to Jane who does the majority of the shopping, and makes sure everything is clean and ready for the next event.





## Message from the Editor:

Thanks to Mike, Plaxy and Lachlan for suppling the reports and Emily and Duncan for the photos. ( Marj)

*You have received this newsletter as a result of participating/showing an interest in one of our events. If you do not wish to receive correspondence from the NTRA, please reply to this email and put "unsubscribe" in the heading.*

