

# Leah Bateman – Graperide Magnum 2010

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Coach: 'So how about the Grape Ride'

Me: 'Ah, yes, this might be a stupid idea but I'm thinking of doing 2 laps – 202km'

Coach: 'that's not a stupid idea, that's a great idea, actually a fantastic idea'

Me: 'I do have Gold Rush just the week before it though'

Coach: 'Ah but you're in a 3 person team taking it easy on Gold Rush, just having a bit of fun right, you'll be great, 2 laps will be awesome, do it!'

So on the first day of Gold Rush my team mtb'er has a very nasty accident, therefore Day 3 of Gold Rush my 'taking it easy' turns into 3km of running, 90km of cycling and 40km of paddling after already having 2 pretty solid days of it all. Panicked phone call to aforementioned coach...'I'm buggered, how am I ever going to do 202km'. Coach: 'you'll be right, I'll let you off spin this week'....nice thanks.

So that's how I found myself, still sporting my sore arse from the previous Monday, driving up to Blenheim on Friday afternoon ready to do the longest ride of my life...87km longer than anything I'd done in training and since Taupo last November. It was always going to hurt and I wanted friends to share the pain, and fortunately thanks to the masochistic lot at CP I had them. Ruth was in for the 101km, Al and Nadeine had already entered the magnum too and with a bit of rubber arm twisting Glenn was up for the two hundy also.

CP team race briefing the night before and Al informs me that to my horror we have to be up at 4am to make it for the briefing...which we were. But after considerable faff we ended up speeding around the back street of Blenheim at 120km/hr to rock up to the start line half way through race briefing....not a good start. We were off before I had time to process what was going on – or remember to put my bike computer on. To say I felt a bit unprepared was a bit of an understatement.

Heading out of Renwick in a bunch in the dark was a bit surreal...hitting Picton as the sun rose was pretty awesome and Queen Charlotte drive was stunning...my bunch lasted to the hills and we all split up. At the end of the hills I was with 2 others and we worked together basically until we hit the hills again (100km on) speeding past a cheering Kylie along the way (thanks for the support!). Queen Charlotte Drive was still stunning 3hrs16m later, but the hills had got a little bigger, the climbs a little steeper and the wind a little stronger and our little trio split up to be surrounded by tail enders of the one lap who were to my disgust sitting on my wheel.

The 202 race wasn't well organised from a fluid point of view and there didn't seem to be anywhere to fill up – it was getting quite hot and I knew I was dehydrated. With 10km to go I just had to make do with the smidgen of drink I had so decided the best way to deal with it was to get home as quick as possible. Cramp was setting in and I was in a whole world of pain and terrified that as soon as I stopped my bike every muscle was going to go into spasm and I was going to be an embarrassing mess writhing on the finish line.

Fortunately I crossed the finish line and Ruth was there to carry me to some fluids. It was a lesson for me on just how much dehydration can affect performance. My first lap was 3hr16m, my second lap was 3hr42m...getting me home in 6hr59m and just under the 7hr mark which I was absolutely stoked with. Not having a race plan – I didn't really have a goal but 7hrs sounded like a good number.

So all in all the actual ride was pretty uneventful and while I felt completely under trained, under prepared and not recovered I got there in what was a relatively respectable time. So just maybe coach knows what he's talking about afterall??

