

# Lyndal Donnelly – Hanmer 4hr Solo

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Not a frost but almost. That shouldn't have surprised me at this time of year. After doing a few MTB races I should also not be surprised at how much the start hurts – but it always does & I question how long I can stay with these people & this pace.



The race started on a 4 wheel drive section of the lap so everyone was well spread out by the time the single track started & it worked as planned. The pace was full on but after about 10 minutes it calmed slightly & the heart rate started to resemble something sustainable.

The course was a mix of 4 wheel drive & single track with some mild technical sections. I have to say it was one of the best courses I've ridden. There was a climb out of the camp area of about 100m – short but hurt more the more times you rode it. Funny that. What seemed like a short time later there was another climb up a forestry road that was long, not particularly steep but just a grovel. The good part was the climbs were out of the way early on in the lap. Then the real fun began with flowing single track, beautiful forestry, a few switchbacks but only enough to make sure you were concentrating.



I'd made a pact to ride steady & have fun but that changed after the 1st lap when something kicked in to say it was going to be an awesome day & I was going to have to be in the moment. I decided to stay with anyone that passed me for as long as I could but if it stopped being 'fun' then I had to let them go. It worked really well as it kept me honest but the race still really enjoyable. There wasn't a breath of wind, not a cloud in the sky & everyone had something positive to say which was really nice. Most of these races are head down serious business where this had such a 'feel good' factor & obviously I wasn't the only one enjoying the day.

The time went really quickly & before long I was into the "you'll have to ride the next 2 laps really strongly" comment from hubby. One lap down & sent out for my final lap which "will have to be one your best" ... good grief ... no pressure! The last lap was so much fun & my 3rd 'surprise of the day which isn't a surprise' was how good you feel in 'last lap mentality'.

The roller-coaster of panic/self-control continued as I came across slow traffic on some of the technical sections with the giant clock darting in & out the trees with me. Finally I entered the camp area to lots of yelling from those aware of the giant clock. Across the line in 3hrs 59min 49sec ... 11 seconds to spare ... could've stopped for a coffee. I have a new Tui add – "it all went perfectly to plan".

My last surprise was – it's funny how many people come up to you immediately after the finish line when you are incredibly nauseous. Yeeehaaa – wish it was next year now, I had such a fantastic day.

Huge thanks to my wicked support crew: hubby, Nigel, for his encouragement & food preparation, Felix & Sami for pretty much the loudest cheering & Richard for his support & calm words of wisdom just at the right time!

