

## Mountain bikers embrace unique trail at Botanic Garden

More than 250 riders arrived last Saturday at The Australian Botanic Garden, Mt Annan from all over Sydney and as far as Newcastle, Canberra and Dubbo to compete in round three of the SHIMANO MTB Grand Prix four and seven hour mountain bike endurance event series. The prestigious four hour elite male category title went to Campbelltown local and U23 Australian National team rider Daniel McDonald and the seven hour endurance podium was claimed by elite racer Ed McDonald from Canberra.

With spring in the air and under sunny, blue skies the EnduroTrail was the arena for Rocky Trail Entertainment's third endurance mountain bike race at The Australian Botanic Garden at Mt Annan. After their first JetBlack 24 Hour race hosted at Mt Annan in December, Saturday's race was the second SHIMANO Mountain Bike Grand Prix at the venue, which has become one of the most popular mountain bike (MTB) trails in Sydney.

### Daniel McDonald wins on home track

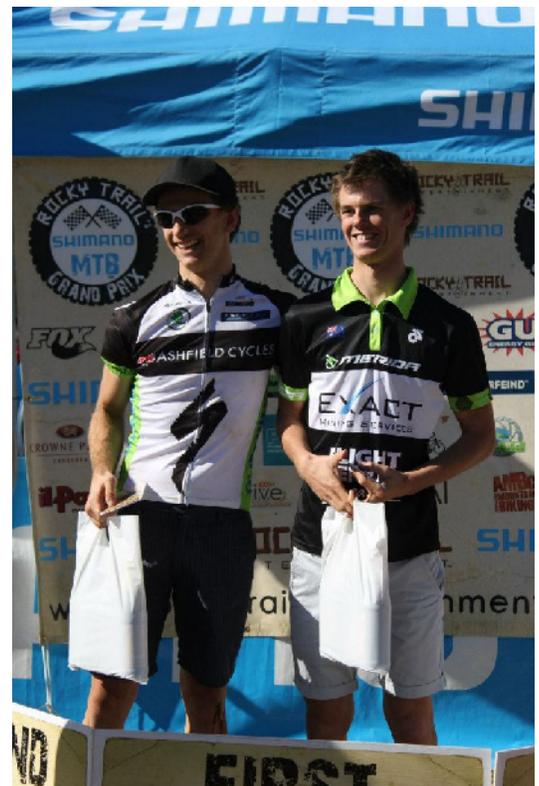
The 4-hour event in the elite male category was won by a young and talented rider from Campbelltown, Daniel McDonald. Daniel has been racing successfully in the Australian U23 National team and finished in the top 10 in the Australian National Cross Country Championships earlier this year. On Saturday he dominated the elite men's field in the 4-hour event, completing 9 laps in just under the four hour mark. Second in the elite men's field was Aaron Lakeman from Westmead and Brian Price from Faulconbridge claimed third.

The four hour race was the most popular racing format with more than two thirds of the 300 riders at the start line finishing their race after midday. The remaining long-endurance racers kept pushing hard and completed lap after lap until later in the afternoon.

The elite female category saw the biggest field of racers in the series with Wendy Walker from Faulconbridge not only winning it with 8 laps ahead of fellow Blue Mountains rider Clea O'Brien and Vanessa Boatwright from Collaroy, but Walker also clocked the fastest female lap time of the day. For this achievement she was awarded with the "Tracey Robinson Trophy", which was introduced to the series by Rocky Trail and named in memory of one of their most passionate and talented female racers.

### Ed McDonald gears up to win

Ed McDonald from Canberra completed most laps in the elite men's 7-hour race. With 16 laps on the tough 10km course he claimed the most laps of a solo rider of the day ahead of series leader Andrew Lloyd from Newcastle and fellow-Canberran Jamie Ingram.



GP4 hour elite male winner Daniel McDonald (right) and runner-up Aaron Lakeman.

McDonald has been known to ride single-g geared bikes, however, for this race at Mt Annan, he raced a geared mountain bike, which proved the right choice.

"I broke myself on this tough course in last year's Jet Black 24 Hour going stupidly hard on a singlespeed [bike]. So I decided it would be worth trying out some gears on the same track."

The seven hour female solo field was dominated by Master rider Catherine Wood (Dubbo, NSW) who completed 12 laps. Fellow female racers Su Pretto claimed the SuperMasters category with 11 laps and Sarah Neumann (Newcastle) finished with 7 laps in elite.

The line honours of the team with the most laps ridden went to the team of three riders from Ashfield Cycles who completed 17 laps in just over seven hours ahead of the male pair from Bernard Racing with Ondrej Slezak and Michal Kafka. Ondrej Slezak clocked the fastest lap time of the day with 23:10 minutes.

### **Rocky Trail to host JetBlack 24 hour race at Mt Annan again**

Race organisers Rocky Trail Entertainment were very satisfied with the event and they will return to the Mt Annan Enduro Trail in December with their JetBlack 24 Hour mountain bike endurance race. After last year's inaugural 24 hour event at Mt Annan more than 600 riders are expected to participate solo and in teams of up to six riders.

Race organiser Martin Wisata from Rocky Trail said that for the 24-hour race very specific sustainability measures including exclusion zones and alternative tracks during bad weather will be put in place referring to the wet weather and track closure policies in place at the botanic garden.

"We feel very privileged to host two of our main endurance races at the Mt Annan mountain bike track. It's the only public trail within a botanic garden and we have been working together with the trail carers and the team at The Australian Botanic Garden to ensure the certainty for our riders when they sign up for a race. It is very important to us that our events are run safely and in a sustainable way to protect the trails and pristine nature around it.", added Wisata.

At the race at Mt Annan, Rocky Trail has implemented a new method of track-marking, reducing the amount of singular-use marking tape used by switching to reusable arrows on stakes. After every Rocky Trail race there is also always a crew of designated mountain bikers – including the company's two main directors – who sweep the race tracks, picking up any lost items and garbage.

"At Rocky Trail we have a 'leave-no-trace-behind'-rule - maybe it's because I was a boy scout as a kid", explained Wisata his company's commitment to a neat event centre and track after every event.

The final SHIMANO MTB GP series race will be hosted at Appin on 29 September in cooperation with the Wollongong MTB Club.

**Results Round 3, Mt Annan:**

**GP7 hour Elite Male**

1. Ed Mc Donald	On the Rivet!	Watson, ACT	16 laps/7:06:43
2. Andrew Lloyd		Barnsley, NSW	15 laps/6:56:07
3. Jamie Ingram		Evatt, ACT	14 laps/7:02:52

**GP7 hour Female**

**Master:**

1. Catherine Wood		Dubbo, NSW	12 laps/7:37:46
-------------------	--	------------	-----------------

**SuperMaster:**

1. Su Pretto		Valentine, NSW	11 laps/7:07:35
--------------	--	----------------	-----------------

**Elite:**

1. Sarah Neumann	I like Chocolate	Kahibah, NSW	7 laps/4:09:41
------------------	------------------	--------------	----------------

**GP4 hour Elite Male**

<b>1. Daniel McDonald</b>		<b>Campbelltown, NSW</b>	<b>9 laps/3:58:23</b>
2. Aaron Lakeman	(Bernard Racing Solo Elite)	Westmead, NSW	9 laps/4:04:36
3. Brian Price		Faulconbridge, NSW	9 laps/4:16:39

**GP4 hour Elite Female**

1. Wendy Walker		Faulconbridge, NSW	8 laps/4:10:46
2. Clea O'Brien		Blue Mountains, NSW	7 laps/4:01:27
3. Vanessa Boatwright		Collaroy, NSW	7 laps/4:05:35

For detailed results and more event information

- visit the Rocky Trail website at [www.rockytrailentertainment.com](http://www.rockytrailentertainment.com) or
- contact Juliane Wisata at 0416 737 972 or via
- email to [juliane@rockytrailentertainment.com](mailto:juliane@rockytrailentertainment.com)

