

Ride 451 Report – 07 July 2013

The American Independence Day Ride!

Hares: Michael Owen, Mikael Hartman, Stiffy and Mummies Boy (in absentia)

Location: Tampines Avenue 9 and Tampines Street 72

American Independence Day Ride. Even the title has the ring about it of a disaster or apocalyptic type movie like Terminator II - Judgement Day, Armageddon, Resurrection Day, etc. Was this ride going to be a disaster epic, time would tell. Having planned to ride to Tampines Avenue 9, I woke to find that a mixture of lingering hangover from our company's quarterly lunch and energy sapping euphoria (and relief) that the Welsh rugby team had at last managed a victory against the Wallabies the night before had taken its toll. Time to take the car to some HDB car park. Having eventually found Block something A amongst all the other nondescript gulags in Tampines, a few bashers were lingering at the car park entrance, obviously a game of brinkmanship was developing as to whether riders would assemble in the car park or downstairs. With most people having gathered around the 4th level, it was decided that the pre-ride briefing should take place downstairs by the car park entrance.

The first disconcerting thing was the low numbers of Yank faces amongst the Hares, the second very disconcerting factor was when Stiffy (named for being a stiff upper lipped Brit) stepped forward to tell us what to expect on the ride. Paper, blue and white chalk and probably some flour. The tranquil Tampines atmosphere was shattered as 40 odd bashers tore off towards the main road and across to the pavement on the other side. At this point it could be seen that blue chalk should only be used for marking secret messages or secret spy drop zones, as it is almost totally invisible on the pavement. Having overshot the markings I headed up the slope of the pavement across the Tampines savannah and into a building site. The trail worked its way further along towards Tampines MTB park, sadly now closed ready to be turned into a desperately needed condo or HDB development. Entering the park by the side door we headed towards the trail that starts with a rock garden and gets worse as it goes up the steep hill.

I was about 50 meters behind the front riders at this point as I watched one of the front riders do a superb somersault over the handlebars and which must have hurt when they came down on the rocks. However, for some reason, I was the only person who seemed to witness this painful acrobatic feat as nobody else remembered it for crash of the day later on in the Circle.

This section along the MTB trails was great and it is a pity they are to be consigned to concrete. I doubt that Singaporeans will recognise grass in 10 years time. Up the rocky hill and through the wonderful forest track and up a steep climb again until we eventually exited the park. From the park we then negotiated a wire fence with tree stumps sticking up along the way. Looked easy but still people stumbled into stumps. The front riders went heading off into the distance following this, but did not notice a Hare loitering around dropping odd bits of toilet paper. When a distant cry of T-check was heard from a long way forward, we smug back markers back went in the direction of the Hare which took us into a jungly zone and onto a fairly awkward trail. Awkward because the trail was heavily used by motor bikes for scrambling (as we Brits refer to it) which meant that although it was mostly dry, there were deep ruts to get lodged in, punctuated by deep mud wallows that sucked you to an immediate halt, making it quite tiring. Myself, Coo Chi Coo and I think one or two others did this section but as we emerged up the final slope, Too Easy went riding by with the pack, having missed this part of the ride while claiming to be on paper all the way. That old get out of jail statement.

A check on the main road kept us busy for a while, sending Fat Crashing Bastard on a ride of his own. This led to track that skirts Tampines Industrial Ave 1 and the way home. At this juncture, Fat Crashing Bastard suddenly appears going in the wrong direction telling us we are all going the wrong way, well he would wouldn't he? Eventually returned to the Gulag to ride up the levels for the circle. Ride was about 17km.

Circle called by Tim. Hares dragged in, all thought it an excellent ride. To paraphrase the British American mongrel, Winston Churchill, the Americans always get it right after they have tried everything else, in this case Stiffy was brought in. Virgins were called in to tell us it was the best Bike Hash ride they have ever done, they included David (it's a long story), Ricardo who was studying English at the British ~~Spy School~~ Council, so no chance of any improvement in language skills there, Peter who loves it (?) and Sean, aptly named as he is a Kiwi.

Crash of the day was frankly embarrassing as there were so many spazzers, about six in all and I didn't get their names down. Rather disappointing as they were all very minor slips, no smashed out teeth, dislocations or broken limbs, complete lack of blood, and nobody saw the somersault at the MTB park. Charges included Nick (Doggy Style) who without the aid of body armour was trying to kill the locals. Stiffy for not assisting with the checks and Lars' guest David for not having a helmet, but that's a bit personal.

Overall a really good ride which included some excellent trail. Well done the yanks and surrogates.

Scribed by,
Wan King

