

# Trans BC:

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## The Kiwi Contingent

**BASED IN THE KOOTENEY ROCKIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CALGARY AND VANCOUVER, THE TRANS BC IS THE LATEST SIX DAY MULTI-STAGE ENDURO EVENT, KNITTING TOGETHER RENOWNED RIDING DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PENTICTON, NELSON AND ROSSLAND.**

**I**n the six months between entering and taking to the start line, the Trans BC became my most eagerly anticipated event of 2016. The Trans Savoie 2015 had opened my eyes to the thrill of the multi-day format, so the promise of six days blind racing on the fabled British Columbia singletrack had me fizzing with excitement.

Although the event was part of a broader racing season for me, the departure point for my travels had been Nelson, New Zealand, and it transpired that of the 120 internationally diverse competitors who came together in Kelowna for the start of the event, 15 had made the 12,000 km journey from NZ!

Day one of racing began in the hills surrounding Vernon, a 45 minute yellow school bus ride North West of Kelowna. Inevitably the day was described as a warmup for the rest of the week, so we dropped into stage one eager to see what we would be faced with. The first stage was steep with loamy turns and forbidding chundery rock – clearly things were going to be good. The next stage was a committed 20 minute run and I started to realise things would be better than good! I love the challenge of the longer stages, fighting to keep my body over the front of the bike as it fatigues and weakens and inexorably slides further and further off the back. The longer the stage, the higher the risk of mistake, and therefore the greater the adrenalin hit at the end. The following three stages of the day swapped the soft loam for fine slippery dirt and a mellower gradient, where flow and corner speed were key. Impressive trail diversity then for day one and a lake swim to finish.

Day two took us to Penticton. Those with prior experience chattered excitedly – almost emotionally - of rock slabs, blind drops and shredded tyres! My level of anticipation was sky high and the way the trails crisscrossed the landscape utilising the bed rock at every opportunity was incredible.

STAGE 1 DAY 6 NELSON. WELLINGTON RIDER JOHN JACOB DESCENDING FROM THE ALPINE AT OVER 2000M ON 'BARELY THERE' SINGLETRACK LITTERED WITH SNOW POCKETS AND BC BEDROCK.





MEG RICHARD ON STAGE TWO, DAY ONE, VERNON:  
20MINUTES OF LOAM AND LOG RIDES...

On such lightly ridden terrain the line was never obvious and provided perhaps the greatest 'blind racing' challenge of the week. Mary Jowett, who calls Queenstown home, said it was her favourite day of the race. *"The trail builders knitted together amazing routes through what would seem un-rideable rock formations. Challenging line choices that had to be made fast, but there was always a line through."* Mary, who enjoys riding Pitchblack and Salmon Run at home, described the tracks as *"like NZ trails on steroids."*

Day 3, Rossland, offered different riding terrain again. A chunky transfer in the school bus dropped us at the base of a one hour singletrack climb which eventually topped the tree line and had us pushing through snow. Spectacular alpine scenery and wild flowers surrounded the stage one start gate. This forbidding stage was a favourite of the day for many of the Kiwi contingent, including Ali Quinn and John Jacob. It comprised high speed and narrow width

with pedal grabbers hidden off-line. The following pump and flow stages took us past our ski condo accommodation en route to the final stage of the day, which would finish at the hotel hot tubs. This was a rare three minute run which took a direct route down the fall line on an old DH track, pumping up both brakes and forearms. Another night in quality accommodation epitomised the class of the event.

The school bus shuttle to the start of day four in Rossland was a short one but gained some useful elevation for five stages that became progressively more technical as we rolled through the day. The weather added a grade or two of difficulty, with plenty of wet wooden bridges to negotiate. Bikes were clearly suffering; at the finish of stage three I came across a broken frame, crankset, pedal and multiple punctures.

The fourth stage of the day was unfortunately not only breaking bikes but riders as well. The rock garden straight

out of the start gate was reminiscent of Wicklow EWS, with riders trying to scope out a rideable line. With rain starting to fall Mary Jowett dropped in and was promptly ejected straight out the front door. She came down hard on hip and knee, bravely walking out of the stage only to discover later that the hip was broken! Seeing Mary and a few others go down and with the rain worsening, a lot of riders were pulling the safe card and running it instead. Jonny Waghorn from Wellington reported *"Probably my favourite trail was The Flume. As we arrived at the start Mary had just had an unfortunate spill on the start line rocks and freaked everyone out. The next six riders walked the start bit! The trail was full of wild rocks, loamy corners, and committed drops and rollovers. All rideable for me but also scared me just the perfect amount!"*

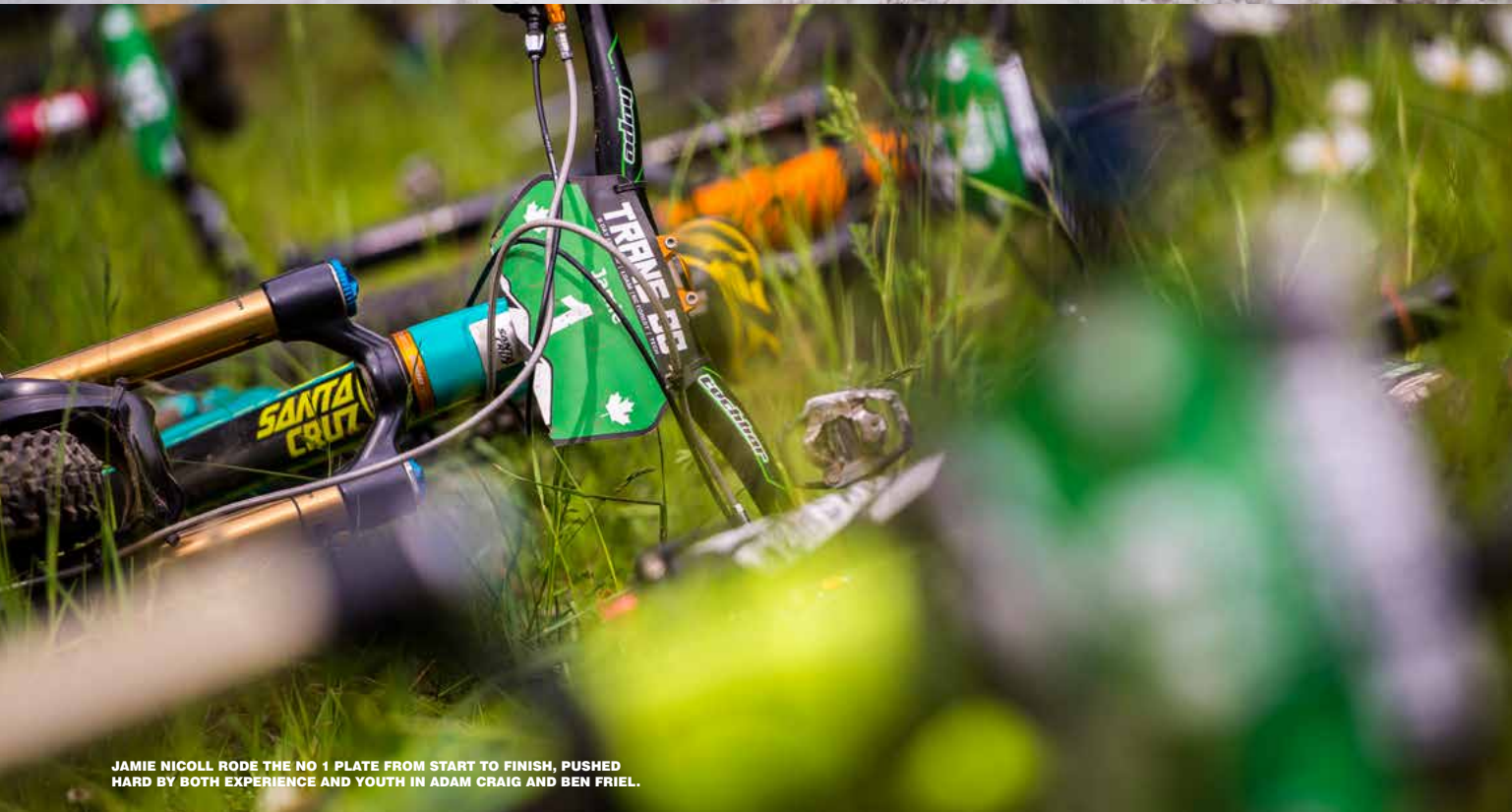
The final two days of the event were based out of Nelson, and I felt that the riding here shared its steep and technical nature with Nelson NZ.



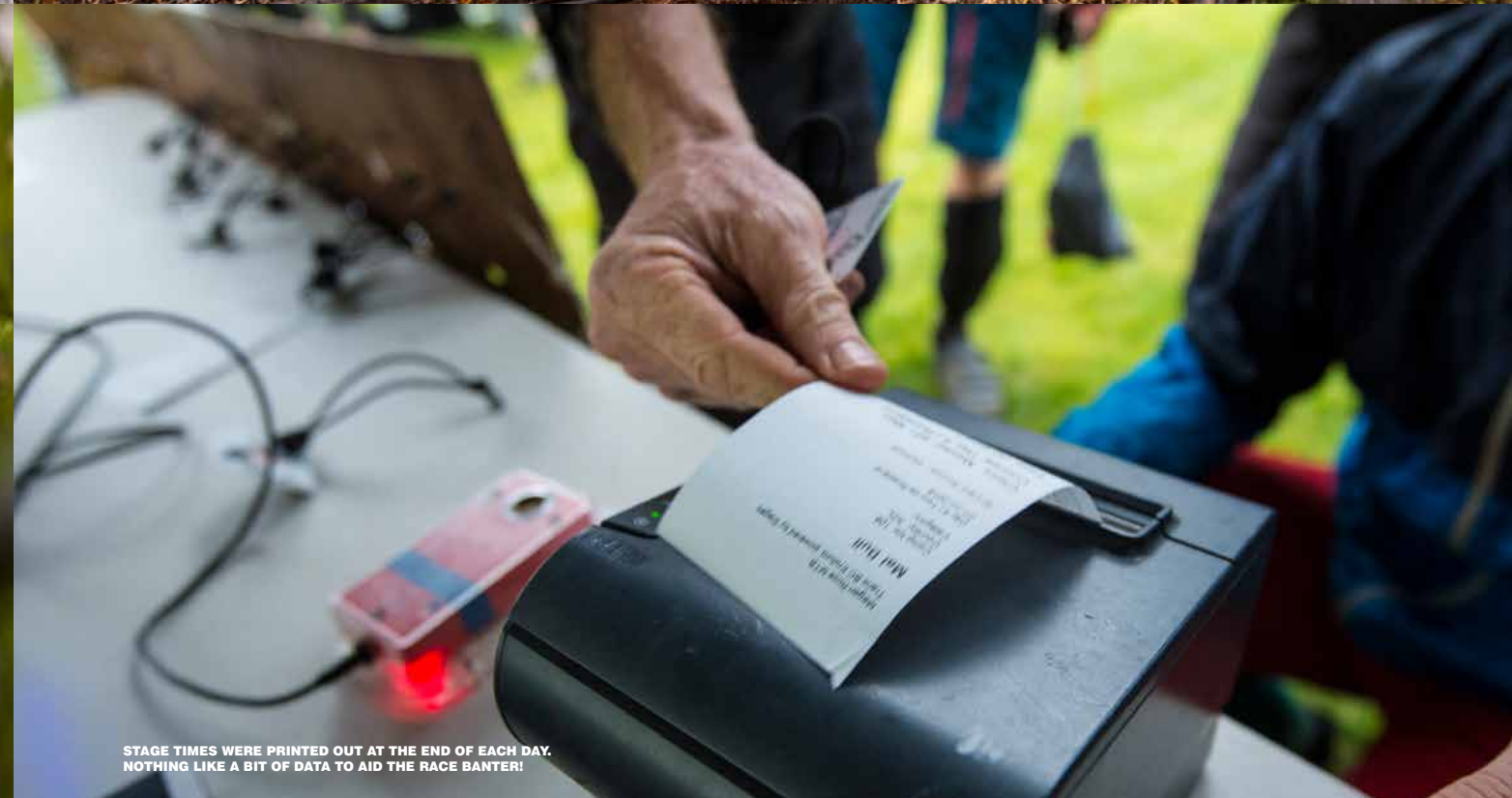
ENDURO IS NOT ALL DOWN. RACERS HAD SOME CARRYING TO DO ACROSS THE SNOW OF SEVEN SUMMITS TRAIL, ROSSLAND.



TRACKS CAN LOOK SMOOTH FROM A DISTANCE. NOT SO MUCH UP CLOSE. LUCKILY THE WET ROOTS AND MOSSY ROCK OF NELSON BC PROVED POPULAR WITH THE KIWIS CONTINGENT.



JAMIE NICOLL RODE THE NO 1 PLATE FROM START TO FINISH, PUSHED HARD BY BOTH EXPERIENCE AND YOUTH IN ADAM CRAIG AND BEN FRIEL.



STAGE TIMES WERE PRINTED OUT AT THE END OF EACH DAY. NOTHING LIKE A BIT OF DATA TO AID THE RACE BANTER!

Stage one of day five was a favourite with Ben Friel from Christchurch: "When it started pouring down on the ride up I just remember laughing and having the biggest smile on my face. The root carpeted track with a stream of water running down it was the cherry on top! One of the best tracks I have ridden in my life." Jamie Nicoll and Zac Williams of Nelson NZ and Wellington also thought the riding on these days was the best of the week.

Ali Quinn likened the stages to Tinakori hill in Wellington and picked out the last stage of the day as his favourite. "Wet, rocks, steep and coming on the back of a big day out, it was cool just to survive it." Day six started with a double shuttle. First in the venerable school bus as far as it could reach up the forest road and then by pickup and minivan. This left us a 1 hour 30 climb to the snowline. It was freezing and unfortunately swaths of mist and rain hid

Alpine scenery. The stage off the top was probably the toughest of the week, with slime covered off camber rock slabs and serious gradient - I heard someone saying 66%! There was little chance of reducing speed and nowhere appealing to crash if your grip didn't hold on the rock. This was the one stage of the week where I opted to bum slide the steepest rock chute. The final stage of the week, number twenty nine, offered a 900m vertical drop and the

number of crashes told the story of fatigue. Jonny Waghorn told me "I had a big crash on the last stage of the last day, probably because I was getting tired, had my bars twisted, dropper lever broken, brake lever broken, hurt my wrist quite bad, had a nose full of loam, and I had to check my teeth!" The vibe at the lakeshore back in Nelson was one of camaraderie and achievement. Megan Rose (organiser, who bases half of her year in NZ) delivered the goods and

exceeded everyone's high expectations. She pulled together the cream of the BC interior riding and packaged an event that guaranteed good times. Oh, and the Kiwis cleaned up the podiums, winning every category! Ben Friel: "The riding was on such a high level; gnarly chutes, rock slabs, roots, it was all you could dream for! That was an amazing time riding my bike on blind trails with awesome people, bring on the next one." Ally Mackay, Christchurch: "I can honestly

say I loved every day - at the end of each day I thought there was at least one stage that really pushed my abilities and that that day was the best, but then each day kept topping that - so hard to just pick one."

RESULTS  
Open Men - Jamie Nicoll NZ  
Open Women - Meggie Bichard NZ  
Masters Men - Matt Patterson NZ