

2009 - Best Crash Award - Chris Henry

It all started so well... My first Karapoti: training was good, nutrition had improved, lost 11kg since Christmas and even got a personal trainer to keep me on track. My mate and I even recce'd the course in the rain, which turned out to help on the day! Slept well, had all my gear sorted, was rearing to go and had a great start... But best laid plans etc...

Crap weather led to slippery conditions and mud galore. Both brakes were effected so I had to slow my descent off Deadwood but at the top of Rock Garden they were both shot. Started down, running most of the way until about halfway down and then jumped on my trusty steed and tried to make up time on what I thought was a flat section.

It wasn't. Needless to see the flat quickly dropped away and I was going way too fast. Unclipped my right pedal with the idea of stepping off to the left seamlessly into a run. While still on the seat I tried to unclip my left - it stayed locked in and the movement caused me to swing over to my left. Starting to lose my balance I yanked at the pedal, twisting my handlebars so I'd stay on course but began to go over...

You know how they say everything goes in slow motion when you have a really big crash? They're wrong. I had only enough time to think, "Oh shit this is going to hurt!"

My left shin took the impact of my bike and somersaulting over as the bike flew into trees I came down on my back - blowing my camelback - and landed upright in blackberry and gorse.



Straight away I saw I had peeled back my shin. But the total extent of my injuries were out of view on my calf muscle.

Two competitors stopped. The first had what seemed like a full trauma kit and after telling me twice to "put pressure on it", I knew it was the end of my ride. A third rider ran to the nearest rescue team, whose faces made it clear that I had done some damage. With their help I was able to get to their 4WD vehicle and they drove me out to an ambulance headed for Lower Hutt Hospital.

The deep laceration to my left shin, extending to my calf, took three internal stitches to the muscle sheath and 11 external stitches. The area over the shin itself couldn't be stitched because of the lack of skin so it will just have to heal itself.

I never thought I'd be entering a crash competition but I guess that's what Karapoti is about; pushing yourself in tough conditions.

Thanks to the dozens of riders who checked if we were ok as they came past us on the "Garden".

Special thanks to the three guys who were right behind me and stopped to help and to Stuart and Sarah of Upper Hutt Community Rescue who got me back in generally one piece.

Definitely doing it again next year - just a bit more sedately perhaps....

25th anniversary here I come... WAHOOO!

Note: A year later Chris Henry returned to set a new Karapoti puncture record - 12 !
