

EMMA RHYMER

Almost 6 years ago I was one of the teachers helping to supervise my school's annual Year 9 camp. My personal philosophy was to take part in all the activities with the students (except for team building exercises) & mountain biking was one of the activities offered. I was a little nervous, as it was my first time on a bike in over 30yrs & I'd hardly ridden before that. I barely stayed upright, couldn't figure out how to change gears - & I couldn't stop grinning. Riding through the bush was exhilarating!

I went home at the end of the week & kept thinking about dirt trails. At the time I was a regular gym goer so I started going to spin classes - I didn't own a bike & I figured I couldn't fall off a spin bike! At the start of the Christmas holidays a colleague kindly loaned me his old bike & I set about learning how to actually ride. Once I'd mastered changing gears, I joined in with kids' coaching at Toowoomba Mountain Bike Club - & struggled to keep up with the u10s.

I met Dylan the following year, & couldn't believe my luck when I found out he was a keen mountain biker. With Dylan's help, I bought a bike of my own. Dylan was incredibly patient and a great coach, but in my efforts to try and keep up with him I also sought further coaching. Through this, I was introduced to the Wild West XCO Series as a way to improve my skills, &

quickly rediscovered my competitive streak. Realising I wasn't terribly FAST, however, I decided to go FAR instead - although my idea of 'far' has steadily increased from 4hr races, to 6hr, 8hr & 10hr races, right through to solo 24hr races.

I've now well & truly caught the 24hr bug & this is my firm focus for 2020. (I've told Dylan the only cure is to ride more 24hr races....) I had a great 2019, placing first in my age group at my first 24hr at Hidden Vale, and second behind Michelle Woods at the Australian Solo 24hr National Championships & the WEMBO Asia Pacific Championships in November. After a relaxed Christmas break I'm now back in training, with Hidden Vale, Kooralbyn & the WEMBO World Championships firmly in my sights.

The last few years have been an incredible journey, full of adventure & amazing people. I feel incredibly privileged to have discovered such a passion & focus in my early forties - but still struggle to comprehend that in less than 6 years I'll have gone from essentially learning to ride a bike to (all going well) lining up at a World Championship.

I am honoured to be an ambassador for the Kooralbyn Mountain bike Trails. I first rode here in 2017 and participated in the very first 'On the Edge Event's race here in 2018. Since then the trail network and other facilities have expanded exponentially- making it a very exciting time to ride at Kooralbyn.

I use Jodie Willet of Bikeritemtb for coaching and I am sponsored by iRideBikes Toowoomba.

