

CAPE EPIC 2015 : RACE REPORT

7 Days, 738km, 16500m, South Africa



This past week was the magical Absa Cape Epic. The world's biggest and toughest mountainbike stage race. Spanning 8 days and some 750 km of grueling off-road racing through the beautiful mountains of the Western Cape. This year I had the special honor of accompanying my teammate Kevin Evans on his tenth Cape Epic. A huge milestone and emotional moment for any mountain bike racer, which I'm sure any rider who has done ten will give testament too. Kevin has had a fantastic run during the Epic with four overall podium finishes so it was real privilege to be teaming up with him again.

This year things were slightly different for us and more challenging, the sponsor hunt during November and December proved fruitless and it was only in January that Stan Goetsch of Dischem hearing our situation graciously stepped in and offered to back us for the Epic and Sani2c. His faith and support in us was a huge morale boost and both Kevin and myself are very grateful. Without his kind generosity none of the past week would have been achievable. Thank you Stan and Brandon.

After that things fell together very quickly and smoothly. Mark Ackerman of Volcan bikes threw his brand and faith behind us and committed to supply us with amazing bikes, which we have put solidly to the test the past few months and they have been fantastic. A huge thanks to all the guys and girls at Volcan.

We managed to also get fantastic support from some other key sponsors namely, Salomon, Oakley, Giro, Panda, AndyCab, William Simpson motors, Maxxis Tires, Bevan Newton Johnson, Naeem Omaar of Valencia, Northwave, Adidas, Definitive Bikes and Kev's shop, The

Bike Shop, who all played a roll and made the epic possible, for which Kevin and myself are hugely Grateful.

I wouldn't be able to start this report with out mentioning behind the scenes. We got together the "A" team support crew to look after Kevin and myself during the race. Sandy " the master chef " had all our nutrition and food sorted pre and post race. Grant mechanic extraordinaire had our bikes running smoothly daily. Gary our team manager and most caring soul was there daily looking after us with a huge grin on his face and unwavering support even on our worst days and last but not least Martin our physiotherapist who kept the pins in good order with daily rubs.

The actual race was such a blur; each day had many war stories and drama with the course been really tough and challenging even for the front-runners. The thing that stood out the most for me during the 8 days was the amazing support out there on the route. The spectators were amazing during the week. Kevin and my self's race never panned out as we hoped. The level of competition at the Epic has really improved drastically even with the African teams fighting hard in the front. We never had the legs to contend at the front and I think the days of having a full day job and trying to be competitive at the Epic are over. Unless you're a full time salaried pro it's too difficult to contend at the front. Unfortunately not having that luxury and taking a step back and working a full 8am to 6pm in his bike shop Kevin and myself where struggling to keep with the front runners. However, we gave it our all and I was proud to bring our equipment and bodies over the line in 20th position overall. It was an absolute pleasure representing our sponsors and it was magic of them to be waiting at the finish line to congratulate us. A very special and emotional moment.

Now attention turns to the great trek home and the post epic blues. Reflecting on the past week I feel fantastically blessed to have been surrounded by amazing people during the Epic and super proud to be representing wonderful brands, which I'll support forever after the amazing faith they placed in us.

To each and everyone involved in the journey a huge thanks without all of you it would never have been the same. Thanks.

To all that finished the Epic, congrats and welcome to the club.

Next up, Max will race the World Marathon Series race and Ahburton Series event in Clarens, setting him up nicely to be in position to try winning the yearlong series. I will tackle the Old Mutual Joberg2C, but with a 'slow' friend and the aim to help him through it (we will both be riding Volcans in team kit, but I will have the opportunity to test the new 2016 Stealth model. He will require a fair amount of Biogen products!), whilst I get the body prepared for Max and I to defend our Sani2C title, a race we have notched up nine wins between the two us.

Till then,
Cheers



Kevin Evans

