

# PERFECT ride Sunday 14 November 2021

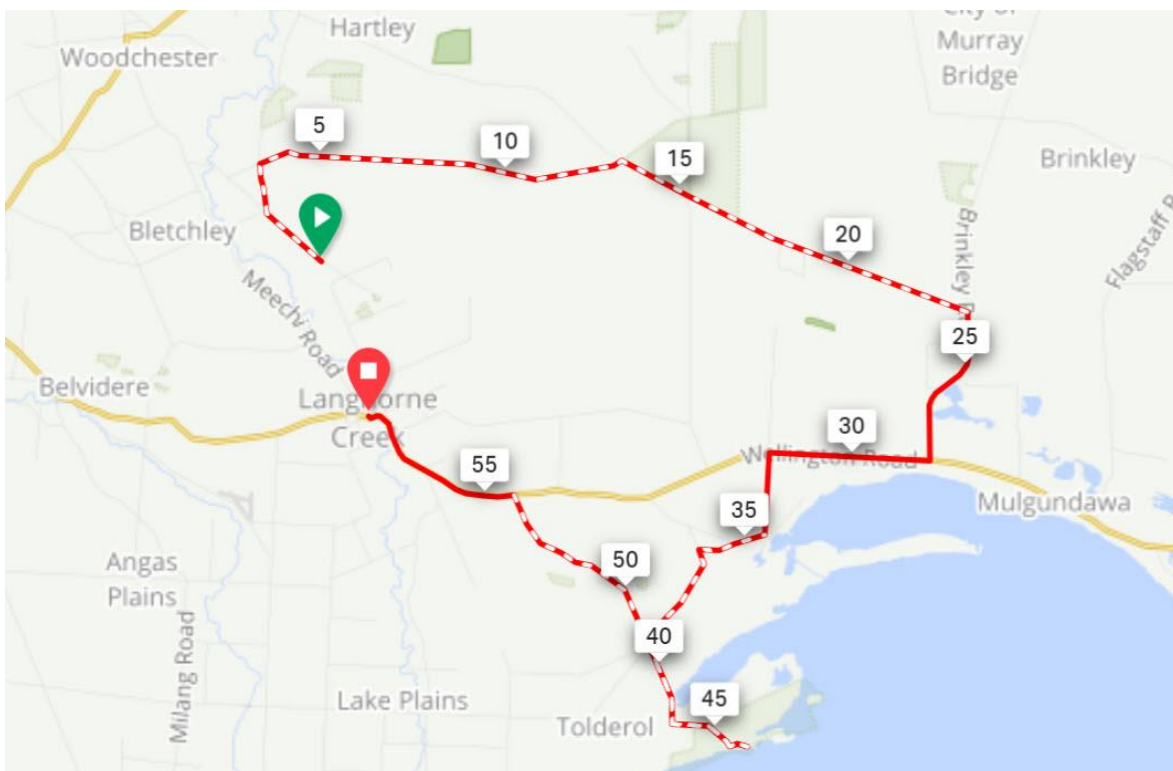
You know that you have enjoyed a good hard ride when the lust for Kentucky Fried Chicken (with large chips and extra salt) becomes irresistible. And when you are in and out of the shower at top speed so as not to delay further the satisfaction of that lust.

Another sure sign is on walking back to the car after the half-hour post ride “debrief”. If you feel a twinge of cramp, it’s been a good hard ride. Of course, it’s not a full-on “debrief”, more of an opportunity to have a chat and a drink. Red wine for some, lemon lime and bitters for the more cautious.



However... a “good hard ride” was not what we had expected. The invitation email had led us to believe quite the opposite: only a couple of hundred metres of ascent over 65km of riding. We are used to 600m or 700m over a mere 45km. So this was going to be a piece of cake. We thought.

Here’s where we went. Well, more or less where we went, because as you can see, someone forgot at the start to press the record button on their Garmin. Once uploaded to Ride with GPS, you can see the dashed line showing unsealed roads or tracks.



Early Sunday morning, a final look to see what the Bureau was promising might have given pause for thought. It might even have deterred people, so perhaps the leader was pleased to see 7 more arrive at Langhorne Creek for a 9am start. Of the 30 who had received the invitation email, we had Ros, Don, Kevin D, Roger, Brianna, Jane and Richard from Oxford. You can also see from the map that from kilometre 25 to lunch at kilometre 45, we were travelling mainly south west. Sometimes battling the brisk south-westerly blowing at a steady 35km, and sometimes resisting the cross wind. Mixed in with the steady 35km/hour wind came frequent gusts of up to the mid 60s.

Some of the 7 who turned up had indeed checked the forecast, but no one had bothered to compare the planned route with the forecast wind direction. In fact, hardly anyone even knew details of the route apart from the promise of a flat ride with nice scenery and “a sort of” sea view. Ignorance is bliss. Clearly, no one had taken much notice of the wise disclaimer in the invitation email. Kevin had warned: “Can’t guarantee the wind or heat, sorry”.

I was able to interview one the 22 Perfect regulars who hadn’t responded to the invitation. When told that he had missed a “good hard” ride, Justin told me (and he is happy for this to be on the record): “Do you think I’m crazy? Didn’t you see the forecast?”

Fortunately, our ride leader (Kevin B) did what all good leaders do: he led from the front. Sacrificed himself to protect his men (and 2 women) from the onslaught. Our 2 e-bike riders did their bit too, but soon found that their battery would not survive the headwind for long and had to drop back. Shame on the rest of us. No one volunteered to take over the burden of leadership. If only there had been a few bends to provide some relief. Straight as far as the eye can see – and our leader here rallying the troops.



Was the “good hard ride” worth it? Definitely. I met up with Don and Jane a couple of days later and we fondly reminisced about the pain as we fought off that headwind. Whatever doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.

Was the KFC the answer? Definitely not. As we know, there are some urges that should be resisted – and KFC is one of them.

