

Trials Tales

Section Four, Day 2, Oz Titles

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Arriving early on the Sunday with the sun shining, my intent to take some great shots after the previous day's cold and cloudy conditions making photography less inspiring.

Seeing a camera dangling from my neck a little bird told me that Section Four might be worth staking out as it was the most significant obstacle facing the expert riders on this day.

I snapped away at riders tackling the old car in Section One which provided some slippery moments and stopped by a largish step in Section Two. Section Three provided a scary-looking down rock, with a nasty runout, but it posed no problems for the riders. Section Four was beckoning however, and I made haste as not to miss any of the action when the first experts tackled it.

Arriving there I saw what all the fuss was about. A tricky upward climb over some small boulders before the riders had to line up a shoot up the flank of a near vertical monolith. This huge boulder jutted out the side of a steep rocky hill and would've been a tough enough without the messy run-up. To make matters worse, and this is where top trials riders need nerves of steel,



The tough job of retrieval.

there was a 6 - 7 meter vertical drop on one side. Miss your line here and it would be a straight fall down to the rocks below.

Surprisingly, on the first lap, those riders who successfully negotiated the tumble of boulders at the start of the section also made the big rock too. I got some spectacular shots as the riders came through, but at this stage thankfully no big prangs occurred.

In the afternoon I wandered down to Section Four again. The warm sun of the day had turned the riding lines from grippy dirt to fine slippery dust. Now the challenge was on! Once again the first riders through successfully negotiated the section, but it was harder to hold lines as things got dustier.

I waited at the top of the rock ready for the action. A couple of riders failed to get onto the rock as they lost their line. Then Mitch Green lined up, his minder obscured my view, but I could tell by the sound of the engine that he'd lost his line. Mitch carried the bike to the edge of the precipice and then disappeared. My God, I thought there will be blood on the rocks down there. Mitch's bike was fortuitously hung on a tree (and revving it's guts out) and as I peered over the edge there was Mitch hardly shaken and quite OK. He'd landed on his feet (must've been a cat in a previous life)!

Shortly after this action and prying Mitch's bike from the tree, the Zarczynski brothers approached. First one to line up was Kevin. Kevin as is befitting of his skill cruised through the first part of the section. His father was minding and asked if Kevin would like him catching on the big rock. Kevin was unconcerned as he had already got over this obstacle no problems on the first lap. So Dad stood right at the bottom of the rock. Kevin didn't make it and pummeted off the rock bike in hand. Once again I thought the worst, and this time I feared Dad would be crushed under the bike and rider. Once again I peered off the top of the rock meekly only to be greeted by the sight of Kevin still with bike in hand and Dad safely off to one side (he'd decided discretion was the better part of valour). Amazingly, Kevin had slid down the vertical surface of the rock still holding onto the bike.

After these fun and games I thought I might leave the rock as I didn't actually want to see a nasty accident or certainly not photograph one. Incidentally, Colin Zarczynski rode straight up that rock after seeing his brother tumble off it. He then rode on to become champion. Vail.



Kevin Zar starts his long slide down.....



Mitch Green about to defy the odds.