

Well it is only 2 weeks away from embarking on Odyssey 3. Yes - truth be known, I am setting out for my third ride from Adelaide to Blinman. I distinctly recall reaching Blinman at the end of my Odyssey 1 [2007] and saying to myself that if I EVER thought of doing it a second time, someone ought to shoot me... but here I am lining up eagerly for number 3.

I came to Odyssey 1 in 2007 as a pretty green newbie and definitely managed to improve my MTB skills by the end of the 2 weeks. I had to walk a few patches and I fell off more than a few times... but the buzz from the achievement of riding 900+ km stayed with me for months. I think the realisation several months after I arrived home, when I was still waxing lyrical about this GREAT holiday I had just been on, made me realise I might want to do it again and see if I could do it a bit better!

In 2009 I set out again with great gusto... paced myself better, had 2 years more riding & strength in my legs and found everything a bit easier... but still fell off a couple of times and still found one stretch on day 1 that required my walking shoes!

So what draws me back for go number 3?

I had an idea that I would like to ride the WHOLE way with no walks and no falls, but I challenged myself on the really steep stretch from day 1 the other weekend- and still found myself wanting. It is only a few hundred metres of impressively steep, loose surfaced terrain- but I think I now accept that walking it brings me no shame!

There is also one spot north of Quorn or Hawker that I have managed to hit the deck in almost the exact same place both times... and this year I am determined to get up that particular stretch without a hiccup.

I have been favouring the road bike in the last 2 years and have only got back on the MTB in the last few weeks, so I'm definitely feeling a bit rusty. I pushed myself today on a stretch near Laura to see where I was at!

4 & 1/2 years ago on a trial run, I gave that particular stretch of single-track a go, and couldn't figure out if I should be clipped in or out, kept falling off, and could barely get up the incline. I truly questioned what I had signed up for! Once I got to that stretch on the actual ride - I found it a doddle despite having to stop for breath halfway along. 2 years ago I enjoyed the challenge but got up it without too much thought... I rode it today and got to the end and thought – "Was that it????"

Outback Odyssey 2011- Bring it on!