

Misho Zrakic	Honda CBR1000	Cliff Peters (leader)	Kawasaki ZX10
Ben Warden	Honda CBR1000	Gordon Heydon (rear)	Kawasaki ZX6
Paul Southwell	Honda CBR1000	Rob Langer	KTM 990
Tony Stegmar	Honda CBR1000	Tony Ripepi	KTM 990
Tim Emons	Honda CBR1000	Dave Devlin (1 st ride)	Yamaha R1
Mitar Marescuk	Honda CB1000	Mitch Bond	Aprilia Tuono
Pina Garasi	Honda CBR600		

Ride notes:

- Paul crashed into car on the Point Cook roundabout – broken footpeg, retired home
- Misho's bike wouldn't start at Point Cook roundabout; caught us at Meredith
- Pina left at Werribee to find Misho; rejoined the ride at Meredith
- Mitar met us at Meredith
- Distances between stops: West Gate Shell Servo [17km] Point Cook Shell Servo [80] Meredith [110] Beeac [82] Colac [64] Deans Marsh [63] Batesford
- 399 km Point Cook (start) to Batesford (finish) by Ben's trip meter, 395 km by Cliff's.

It was my first ride back since I crashed near Lara six weeks ago and my new ZX6 had only 363km on the clock. I wanted to take it quietly and give my bike a nice easy day, so when Ben suggested I take the rear rider position I readily agreed.

The ride started from the Point Cook Shell service station and we all cruised out of the servo nice and easy because there was lots of traffic. But at the roundabout Paul was involved in an accident. He was hit by a car but luckily was unhurt. Not so his bike. The right foot peg snapped off and there was some fairing damage. The crash didn't put Paul out of action, but it ended his ride for the day.

We waited on the other side of the roundabout to make sure that he was okay, and helped Paul where we could. Once everything was under control we decided to move on. Ben, Misho and I were the last riders to leave. First Ben took off, and then Misho.

Misho didn't get very far. After leaving the ignition switch on while helping Paul, the headlight had drained the battery enough to stop the bike from starting. We tried in vain to bump start it, the slipper clutch proving a great impediment. After a couple of tries Paul and Misho thought I should get going.

[In the end Misho pushed the bike up the overpass (think 200 kg dead weight, full winter waterproofs, steep slope, Paul laughing) and managed to get it to start using the starter motor switch to trick the bike into not engaging the slipper clutch – a good trick to remember. ...Ed.]

I caught up with Pina corner marking in Werribee and told her about Misho's bike problem. She went back to help, or at the very least offer her bike so they could finish the ride together.

So even before the first stop we had lost three riders.

The rest of the first leg was pretty uneventful, except for Mitch (first time rider) tipping his bike over while corner marking and ending up in whole lot of sticky mud. When I arrived he was still trying to clean the mud from his tyres.

We continued out to the Brisbane Ranges. The day was starting to look like it was going to turn out well, and we made it to Meredith with just good riding.

Just as we were finishing morning tea, Misho and Pina turned up. We learnt how Misho had made Paul's day with fits of laughter watching Misho struggling to push the bike to the top of the hill so he could get it started. Then there was the issue of Pina heading north up the Freeway at a rate of knots and Misho heading south down the Freeway at a greater rate of knots. They just waved to each other. Somehow Pina managed to stop, cross the freeway and meet up with Misho again. The GPS allowed them to find the group. Otherwise they never would have found us.

From Meredith to Beeac, other than good riding, it was pretty uneventful. Riding around Lake Beeac was really beautiful. We stopped at Beeac for lunch, but the general store seemed a bit unprepared for the big influx of people and we were down to crumbs for lunch.

After lunch we headed for Lake Corangamite, but half a way down the road Mitch stopped to tell me he had to go back to get his phone which he left back in Beeac. I rode slowly to the next corner and waited. Ben went ahead and Dave waited with me. Once Mitch arrived we took off again.

A few corners later I found Ben stopped and taking photos of the lake. As I'm riding, the photographer in me started to speak up: the scenery was amazing and I could have spent a lot of time taking photos, but not today.

We stopped at Red Rock Lookout offering views over Lake Corangamite, and then continued on to Colac for a quick splash and dash before Deans Marsh for afternoon tea. On this leg it started to rain a little, but after a few minutes it stopped again.

From Colac we headed for Batesford, a great run. We arrived there just before 5pm. All in all, a great day. Thanks Cliff for leading on very interesting roads.

I was extremely happy my bike performed without an issue. As the day progressed I felt the engine loosen up. My confidence improved and I was able to relax and enjoy the ride.

Today's ride was six weeks after my accident. It has been a long six weeks which included not only getting my bike replaced, but also strengthening my left ankle which I think got caught in the controls in the crash.

I don't like going to hospitals after an accident on a bike. You do everything you can not to tell them that it was a bike accident so you can just get a single X-ray of your foot. After I told them it was a bike accident I was rushed off and the next thing I knew I was having full body X-rays. Then they were surprised that there were no broken bones.

We spend a lot of money on safety gear so that when things go badly we can walk away. I was pleasantly surprised how well my gear protected me (even as I was sliding down the road), but when my ankle got injured, there was strangely no damage to my boots, even though I had damaged every other piece of protective equipment.

My foot was quite swollen after the crash, but after a couple of hours, I didn't really notice it anymore. Four days later I stepped on some glass and saw that it was huge! A couple of weeks later the swelling had gone down. Injuries like this take a while to really heal, and when I started riding again, I found lots of angles which hurt my foot. But today's ride helped, giving the ankle a good workout.

My bike, on the other hand, was not so easily fixed. The assessor listed it as a total loss. This was okay; I would rather the bike was a total loss than me. Insurance to the rescue saw it replaced.

After five months (to the day), the decision to purchase a Kawasaki ZX-6R has not wavered. The insurance company just gave me a replacement bike. No need to get paid out, get new financing etc. The one thing that I learnt is that if you pay your insurance monthly and your vehicle is a total loss, you have to pay the rest of the year's insurance as well as your excess!

I was talked out of a green ZX-6R when I purchased my first one, told that I could have the black one by the weekend, or possibly wait until after Christmas to get a green one. So this time I got what I really wanted; a green one!

Gordon Heydon