

It's Epic! - Part 1

Notably the toughest mountain bike in the world, this year's ABSA Cape Epic covers 654 km of gruelling terrain and it is not without its thrills and spills.

Logistical challenge

But besides all the thrills of the track, there's the logistical challenge of feeding, housing and transporting the 1,200 riders' gear over the eight days of the event. All of which requires the precision of a military campaign.

There are tents to be pitched, tons of food to be prepared and served, scores of Portaloos and ablution facilities and bike washing and servicing to be set up, which all has to happen before the riders arrive.

When the race moves to a new location, the large contingent of volunteers have to ensure that everything is packed and ready to go.

Medical support

Of course, a race of this magnitude is not going to be without its cuts, bruises, broken bones and every other ailment six to eight hours in the saddle (or making contact with the ground at speed) brings with it. So the medical support at the race is also a key component of this particular road show.

Mediclinic has been providing medical support to the Epic since the race's inception. The team comprises eight doctors, eight nurses, five medics on motorbikes and eight medics in 4X4 ambulances. There is a fully-equipped field hospital at the finish, with a pathology lab and all the other medical equipment you would find in a world-class emergency room.

This is their behind-the-scenes story.

Prologue

The shortest leg, the Prologue took place on 13 March at Meerendal wine farm in Durbanville. It was 26 km long with a climb of 700 m won by Karl Platt and Urs Huber, while Robyn de Groot and Jennie Stenerhag won the women's race.

Stage 1

The 108 km route climbed 2,300m and started and finished at Saronsberg in Tulbagh. Platt and Huber and De Groot and Stenerhag took line honours again.

Stage 2

Still at Saronsberg, the riders climbed 2,200 m on the 93 km route. Stage 2 saw Nicola Rohrbach and Matthias Pfrommer and Annika Langvad and Ariane Kleinhans snatch the lead in the men's and women's race respectively.

Stage 3

On Stage 3, the competitors rode the 104km distance to Wellington, climbing 2,150 m. Platt and Huber regained the lead, while Langvad and Kleinhans hung on to top spot in the women's race.

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