

22 November 2009

Wild storms forces shutdown of 2009 Energy Breakthrough

A BLISTERING performance by Bendigo Senior Secondary College across all three categories saw them take out the 19th Energy Breakthrough but wild storms forced the early shutdown of the 24-hour endurance race.

Competitors battled through six hours of driving rain and blustery wind during the night stage of the event before it was deemed too dangerous to continue.

It is only the second time in the 19 years history of the event that the race has been shut down.

Event organisers said the participants had shown enormous courage and determination to continue to compete in the challenging conditions.

The 330 competitors at RACV's Energy Breakthrough endured scorching heat on the first two days of the event followed by strong winds, dust storms and heavy rain.

Schools Event Coordinator John Stafford said the conditions had tested teams but all participants had worked hard to overcome the challenges of the conditions and it had again been a memorable event.

"We've seen some great action on the track from our teams and they've really battled through some trying conditions showing great tenacity," Mr Stafford said.

"Unfortunately we had to cut it short for safety reasons but I think all who took part had a fantastic time."

RACV Energy Breakthrough's first British team were thrilled to participate and had thoroughly enjoyed the event.

"We're thrilled to have the British Hailey's Hall team here and for them to have enjoyed the experience so much," Mr Stafford said.

"It was also terrific to see the Kinglake team come together after the horrific bushfires in February and for them to be so successful."

About 6000 enthusiastic primary and secondary students from 170 schools descended on Maryborough over the weekend for the RACV Energy Breakthrough event.&

A total of 330 teams competed in self-built, human and hybrid-powered vehicles, as well as more basic pushcarts. During the year students and teachers designed and built their environmentally-friendly vehicles as part of the school's curriculum, often with the help of parents and local industry.

Energy Breakthrough involves three stages – presentations to judges, scrutineering of the vehicles by RACV engineers and track events for various categories.

Each team has eight riders and their vehicles can cover up to 800km along the 1.3 kilometre race circuit during the 24 hours.

RACV Event Coordinator, Ernest Litera, said the trying conditions could not dampen the enthusiasm of participants.

“Those taking part just love this event whether it’s hot, wet or windy and we’ve had all three this weekend but I know there are plenty of teams raring to get back here next year with a greater enthusiasm to go all the way,” Mr Litera said.

“The event is all about teamwork through all aspects of the race and it’s evident that goal is being met by our schools time and time again.”

The importance of the event was recognised this year with the Victorian Tourism award for Best Festival and Event.

2009 RACV Energy Breakthrough Results

Hybrids

Section One B/C: Maryborough Education Centre, (Black Magic)

Section One Open: Gisborne Secondary College, (Blue Thunder)

Section Two: Bendigo Senior Secondary College, (Hercules Morse)

Human Powered Vehicles

Class A, One: Carisbrook Primary School (Redback Mercury)

Class A, Two: The Peninsula Junior School (Sirocco)

Class B1: Bendigo South East College (Blame Game)

Class B2: Highview College, (Onyx)

Class C: Highview College, (Evie)

Open: Bendigo Senior Secondary College, (Gus)

All Female: Maryborough Education Centre, (The Supreme Team)

Try-Athalon

Class A: St Margaret’s School/Berwick Grammar (Shooting Star)

Class B/C: Emerald (Zavanz)

Open: Warragul Regional College (Cobra)

Pushcarts

Class 1: Lockington Primary School (Locky Lemurs)

Class 2: St Alipius Parish School (St Alipius)

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The 2009 RACV Energy Breakthrough is a joint initiative of RACV, Country Education Program and Central Goldfields Shire Council.