



# 2018 Australasian Rogaining Championships 'The SunSEQer'

Q&A with Liam St Pierre

## 1. What is your occupation?

I have a background as a molecular biologist, in particular studying the venoms from Australian snakes to see if their toxins could be used as new medicines. These days I run an education program to expose high school students to the possibilities of medical research as a career. Even that is now a part-time gig, with parenting duties and running Raid Adventures taking up a good chunk of my current time.

## 2. What age were you and why did you start competing in Rogaining events at that time?

I did my first adventure race and first rogaine in 2006 at the age of 26. I now realise that is relative young for someone getting in to the sport (the average age of competitors entered in the Raid 100 : 45.5!). I did that first AR after a friend put me onto a sprint race, and the idea of mountain biking sounded a lot less intimidating than road cycling as a discipline. Rogaining naturally followed shortly after as a way to improve my navigation.

## 3. Best Rogaining tip ever received?

"Straight lines win races". Now, I don't know how true it is, but I try to keep it in mind during route selection sometimes.

## 4. How has Rogaining changed since you started competing?

The mechanics of rogaining haven't changed all that much – electronic timing, good quality maps, the HH experience and the relative numbers of competitors have all been constants. Even the gear hasn't evolved too much with the exception of better lighting systems. Perhaps the two biggest changes I've noticed over the last 12 years is the growth of a social media community around rogaining as well as the growth in the multisport, Raid-style events in south east Queensland.

## 5. What sports did you participate in as a kid?

I grew up on a diet of basketball, twice a day, seven days a week. Sometimes I miss it, not just for how dynamic a sport it is but also for the fact that training sessions and games are over in an hour. An hour isn't even a warm up in AR or rogaining!

## 6. What is your favourite type of geographic area to Rogaine in?

Trackless, open, spur-gully terrain typical to what we have in South East QLD is fantastic to move across with map in hand, particularly in the cooler months. I hate scungy stuff, but accept it's part of the game sometimes and unavoidable. I've done some longer AR events in NZ and navigating the big hills above the tree line is pretty special as well. I'm keen to try my hand at some more complex, granite-type terrain on orienteering maps when I get the time at some point in the future.

## 7. What is it you like about the Australasian Champs event in particular?

There is plenty of things about the Australasian Champs that make it the race I'm most looking forward to this year. I'll be racing with a friend, Leo Theoharris, who I haven't raced with since we last did a 24 hour rogaine back in 2015. 24 hours should be just enough time to catch up on all the adventure racing gossip Leo has to share. I have a ton of faith that these particular organisers are going to set an excellent course with plenty of route choice and navigational challenge and the area is meant to be perfect for rogaining. Having a big field with all the top competitors from Australia and NZ will be a good marker of where we are at in the big scheme of the sport. I like the simplicity of how easy it is to prepare for a rogaine compared to an adventure race. And finally, it will be my birthday on the Saturday of the race, so I'll be able to make a ton of Dad jokes about how the sport is ageing me.

**8. How do you stay focused and energized in the 24hr Championship events?**

It's very clichéd, but the focus comes from just tackling one CP at a time. Whilst it's important to keep an idea of the overall course in mind, remembering that everything has an end has been an important lesson for me for the longer races. As much as everything hurts, it will be over at some point.

**9. What has been the hardest and or strangest moment you can recall on a Rogaine?**

My first attempt at a 24 hour rogaine ended dismally. About 12 hours in I was broken and done. Unfortunately we were on the other end of the map from the hash house and it was a long walk back to the car with frequent recovery stops where we froze to the bone. The experience goes to prove that rogainers must have short memory spans. If I'm not mistaken, that event was in the same area the Australasian Champs are being held this year, but I can't recall a single thing about the map or the course.

**10. For those who may be considering participating in a Rogaining event, what do you believe are the merits of Rogaining?**

The biggest lessons I've taken from rogaining are the confidence to go off-piste when traveling in the back country if you have an adequate map in hand, and the strengthening of friendships from some great team mates over the years. I like to race a lot of different races with a lot of different team mates for the social element of racing (not just the competitive element). I don't think I could do these type of sports as a solo competitor.

**11. Not necessarily based on the win or podium result, what do you personally believe has been your greatest Rogaine?**

There have been a couple of rogaines in the last two or three years where we haven't lost any time due to navigational errors – those are probably the most satisfying results. The rogaine result I'm most proud of is winning the Queensland 24 hour rogaine championships in 2016, Dave Schloss was my teammate. We covered 110km that day, and while we didn't have a perfect day out navigationally, it was an all-round fantastic event.

**Anything else to add?**

It would be remiss of me not to give a plug to the team's page: [www.RogueAdventure.com](http://www.RogueAdventure.com) and also a plug for the Raid races – Queensland's own rogaine-format adventure races: [www.RaidAdventures.com](http://www.RaidAdventures.com)

