

## **NZ 1998 Coast to Coast** – by Jeff Hosnell

[Just for some contrast – Jeff Hosnell tackled the same race some 22 years ago!]

*1998 was the biggest year ever for me, in October I made the move with my daughter to Sydney, but before that so much happened on the adventure racing scene. I always wanted to do Coast to Coast, and I had already done all the major races in New Zealand. Living in New Zealand it's very hard to get entry into the race - it's usually a 2 year wait. So in 1997 I entered expecting to do it in 1999. However, in early January 98 I got a call from Robin Judkins the owner of Coast to Coast asking if I wanted to do it the next month - Feb 6<sup>th</sup>! I hadn't done any races or training since October, just a lot of white water trips. My knees were shot but my mates said you will mainly be walking and climbing, so ok lets do it.*

*I had no one to ask locally to support me, so I called a mate in Christchurch who I hadn't seen in 10 years if he could help, and he agreed. Ian had no idea what he had to do, and how important his part in the race would be.*

*The night before briefing was great. I got to meet Steve Gurney. I expected this massive guy but he's not, and I thought I had bow legs - Steve looks like he's been on a horse all his life.*



*You start with your foot in the Tasman Sea run 4km to your bike, then ride 50km to the start of the 28km run. The start of the run was my first problem, Ian wasn't there, he thought I would take longer so he'd stopped for a coffee. I waited nearly 30 mins for my gear and food. The run was really hard for me, so many river crossings and rocks so big to climb over, coming into the finish of that stage I was hobbling.*



*The next morning is a 15km cycle to the Waimakariri River for a 67km grade 3 Paddle, and then Cycle 80+km to Brighton Beach and the Pacific Ocean. I had a great paddle, rescued a couple of paddlers, supplied a spare paddle, but at the end another problem. Ian wasn't there at the changeover to cycle, so again I had to wait until I was given some food and then set out on the cycle. It was a very hot day, 80+ people were hosing us as we went by, other racers were so helpful in pulling you along. At the finish Robin Judkins was there with a can of Speights Beer and a hand shake.*

Below: Jeff collects a Speights from Robin Judkins



*The next day was prize giving and racers stories. There was a very funny story - we had a guy from Scotland who raced in a Kilt the whole race. Well he got up and talked about his experience, first off he had done the Scottish Coast to Coast so he thought "how different could NZ's be"? Well, first of he mentioned the rocks in the river he compared them to Asteroids climbing them with a kilt was not nice. Then we had a surprise, one of the rescue teams got up and talked about this*

*event. Out Lawrence Of Arabia they were in the jet boat, at the back of the field, when they noticed this shimmering figure in a kilt dragging his kayak, moving across the wide area of rock river bed. Now the Wiamak is a very wide river with lots of shoots and he had taken the wrong shoot and it dried up.*

*Looking back I am so pleased I got the chance to do the race, I am amazed at the people who do the Longest day race starting at 6am and finishing same day.*