

Adventure World

Explore. Compete. Live. magazine

Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge

Snowshoeing 101

USARA Nationals

Preparing For An Expedition Race

Chased By An Elephant

Plus

- Socks
- Injuries
- Navigation Challenge

January 2010

2010 American Adventure Sports Race Calendar

April 9-11 AAS Adventure Racing Academy
Ohiopyle, PA

April 24 TeamSOG Youth Xtreme Adventure Race
Ohiopyle, PA - (USARA National Qualifier) 35 miles of mountain biking, 20 miles of trekking/orienteering, 9 mile kayak

June 4-6 TeamSOG EQUINOX TRAVERSE 2-Day Adventure Race

Covington, VA - (Checkpoint Tracker Series and USARA National Qualifier) 70 miles of mountain biking, 50 miles of trekking/orienteering, 20+ miles of canoeing

June 5 TeamSOG Dash 4 Cash Mountain Bike Race
Sarver, PA - 15 mile sport or 20 mile expert

June 5 TeamSOG Buffalo Stampede Trail Run
Sarver, PA - 5 mile novice, 15 mile sport, 20 mile expert

July 11-16 Adventure Racing Camp For Kids
Location TBA

July 31 The Laurel Highlands Mountain Biking Race
Yellow Creek State Park, Penn Run, PA

August 1 XTERRA APPALACHIA
Yellow Creek State Park, Penn Run, PA

August 7-8 TeamSOG LIONHEART Adventure Race

Ohiopyle, PA (Checkpoint Tracker Series and USARA National Qualifier) - 50 miles of mountain biking, 35 miles trekking/orienteering, 10 mile kayak

August 15-20 Junior Naturalist Outdoor Adventure Camp (JNOAC)
Camp Harmony, Quemahoning, PA

Sept 11-12 Allegripis Outdoor Festival
Raystown Lake, PA - Mountainbike Race & Trail Run

September 18 TeamSOG Black Beard Adventure Race
Nags Head, OBX, NC (USARA Points Race)

October 15-16 U.S. Adventure Racing NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Hidden Valley Ski Resort, Laurel Highlands, PA - USARA.com

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Cover Photo:
USARA 2009 National Championships
Photo: bobcat13 photography

This Page:
AIDA Freediving World Championships 2009
Photo by Igor Liberti



A New Year

Even before the new year was upon us...we at Adventure World were busy planning for the new year. We have seen tremendous growth with our website and have some great things in store for the adventure community worldwide. Some of the great things on tap include...more gear reviews available online, adventure destinations, tips from professional athletes, an e-newsletter and an international team ranking for adventure racing. As this issue is released...I will be on a plane heading to the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market to check out the new gear and products coming down the pipeline. I will also be meeting with and interviewing both athletes and adventurers for future inclusion in AWM and AWM Online.

If you have not already...visit our site, follow us on Twitter, become a fan on Facebook sign up for our email newsletter. We are adding this to offer our readers more info and something that you can forward to your friends to tell them about AWM. In the coming months...there will be more contests as well.

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contributors



A product of life in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, Travis Macy has seen success as a professional adventure racer and world-class trail runner, snowshoe racer, and mountain biker. A native of Evergreen, Colorado, he ran on the varsity track and cross country teams at the University of Colorado. Travis has adventure raced in Abu Dhabi, New Zealand, Australia, Korea, Thailand, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, France, Scotland and Alaska. He often feels happiest when out on the Colorado trails with his wife, Amy, and dogs, Kepler and Nelson. Macy's father, Mark, competed in every Eco-Challenge race and continues to participate in outdoor activities with his son.

Adam W. Chase is an accomplished ultrarunner, snowshoe racer, adventure athlete, and father of two boys. He lives in Boulder, Colorado where he practices tax law and is Trail Editor for Running Times magazine, shoe guru for the Competitor Group, captain of Team Salomon and Team Atlas, and President of the American Trail Running Magazine. He just did his birthday run, where he logs as many miles as years...and it is getting to be a long day!



Shane Brown got hooked on adventure racing just in the past few years. Regardless of being lost for 3 hours in his first race and not really much of a contender, Shane is committed to advancing the popularity of the sport. In early 2009, he and co-creator Neil Ireland launched www.RACEDAYRUSH.com as a means to give endurance athletes something worthwhile to train with rather than watching old Seinfeld re-runs and romantic comedy films. He felt that people, including himself, would train harder in the confines of their 'no witness' training facility (translation....unfinished basement) if they were reminded why they became a competitive endurance athlete in the first place. He lives in Toronto Canada with his tolerant wife and 2 beautiful daughters. Yes, they're considering doing an adventure race. It hasn't been determined if they will let Shane race with them or not.

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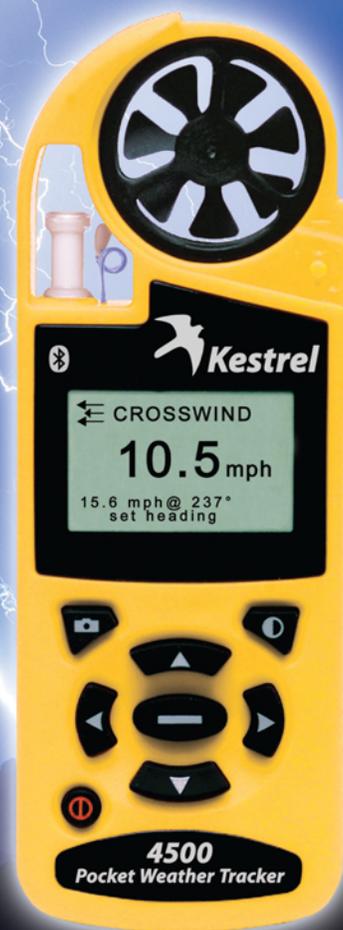
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Racer Spotlight - Team SOG

By Jill Gleeson

Steve Baker was feeling pretty good. It was only about an hour and a half into the race, but he and his teammates, Jennie Belt and Brian Mayer, were ahead of most of the pack - though this was the first time they had competed together. Not yet nine a.m. on April 25th, 2009, the morning was sunny but cool, the grass still damp with dew. As Baker recalls, "This early in the race we had quite a bit of energy and there was no real mental struggle." Yet.

The teammates, all recent graduates of Virginia Tech in their mid-twenties, picked an auspicious, if difficult event with which to christen their new squad. The Yough Xtreme Adventure Race in southwestern Pennsylvania's Ohiopyle State Park takes roughly 12 grueling hours to complete and features over 35 miles of mountain biking; 20 miles of trekking/orienteering; a nine mile kayak on the Middle Yough river; and a 175 foot rappel off a railroad trestle, followed by a river swim. The event, which has been run for a dozen years, is a qualifier for the United States Adventure Racing Association national championship.

Baker and his team had just left the race's first checkpoint and were running down a trail leading from the mountain's ridge. He kicked up a stick, as sometimes happens, and felt it slap into the back of his thigh. There was no real pain, so Baker continued running - until his calf began to cramp. When the spasms grew so severe he was having dif-

ficulty walking, Baker called out to his teammates. They discovered the stick had left a nasty little present: A briar imbedded so deeply in his thigh muscle only the puncture wound was visible.

Baker gutted it out, gritting his teeth and running as best as he could until the threesome made it to the transition point. There, he laid belly down across a few crates while Belt, a nursing student at Virginia Commonwealth University, tried to dig the thorn out with a pair of tweezers. As she did, Baker remembers, "I ate some food. You're never sitting idle during these races. You're always multi-tasking. But the briar had gone into my leg with such force that it was under the skin and Jennie couldn't even see it."

He continues, "After the tweezers failed to remove it, we broke out the two dollar Walmart knife. It wasn't very sharp and when Jennie was cutting my leg open it felt like

I was a steak and she was using a butter knife. She did great; it was just the lack of proper tools that made it a very painful experience." In the end, Belt cut a triangular incision around the puncture, and by pulling the skin back was able to expose and extract the thorn. She filled the hole with antiseptic cream and the team continued the race, Baker's cramp gone. Despite the loss of over 15 minutes and a team member with a nasty gash in his thigh, the threesome went on to take fourth in their division.

Baker, Belt and Mayer learned a valuable lesson that day: in adventure sports, gear is God. From rescue whistles to waterproof jackets, bike helmets to backpacks, the right equipment in the wrong situation doesn't just mean the difference between winning and losing, it can mean the difference between life and death. At the very least, good, reliable tools can give extreme athletes the confidence to push harder and faster; at most they save lives.



Photos courtesy of bobcat13 photography

Maggie Hamill is a 27-year old climber who spends her off the rocks hours working toward her Ph.D in computer science at West Virginia University. She knows all too well the significance of dependable equipment. "I had a pretty good friend who was recently killed climbing," she says softly. "They think his ascenders malfunctioned. For a climber, it's crucial that you can rely on your gear to do what it's supposed to do. When it doesn't, you're in a completely unexpected situation...and that's usually very dangerous."

"So when you get an opportunity to use a piece of gear, you learn to like it and trust it," Hamill adds. "You don't want to give it up. Whether it's a t-shirt or an ascender that will lock you onto the rope, quality makes a big difference. You learn to trust the brand."

That dependence on gear – and loyalty to specific brands – is making extreme athletes such as Baker and Hamill increasingly attractive to corporations seeking to up their product's profile with sports sponsorships. In September, Baker, Belt, Mayer and Hamill, who were recruited by and compete for manager Doug Crytzer, were awarded a SOG Speciality Knives and Tools sponsorship deal. (Other members of the Team SOG adventure racing team include Kristen Dieffenback; JD Eskelson; Chris Caul; Toby Angove and Alisa Pitt. Joining Hamill on the climbing team is Matthew Shreve; the kayaking team consists of Susan Hollingsworth and Jake Greenbaum.)

According to SOG's CEO and founder, Spencer Frazier, his company's association with adven-

ture athletes makes good business sense. "For a brand like SOG Specialty Knives and Tools, which is devoted to the highest quality gear that can be depended upon in the harshest of conditions, affiliation with endurance athletes such as those that compete in adventure racing is crucial," stresses Frazier. "Participants and fans of adventure racing know the degree to which athletes depend on their gear. They wouldn't affiliate with a sponsor if their products did not meet their standards. It provides important confirmation of our product's quality and of our understanding as to what the needs of athletes are. It greatly helps enhance the image of authenticity that we enjoy."

The history of commercial sponsorship of adventure athletes goes back about a dozen years, when corporations such as Hi-Tec, Balance Bar and Red Bull began partnering with and promoting the sport. In 1998, British shoe maker Hi-Tec kicked off the inaugural Hi Tec Adventure Racing Series, a one-day sprint competition that toured cities throughout the United States and culminated in a televised national championship race. Nutrition bar Balance Bar, who had long sponsored adventure racing teams, founded a 24-Hour Adventure racer series in 2002; a year later it took over production of the sprint series from Hi-Tec. But perhaps no other business on the planet has built their brand with alternative athletes quite the way energy drink Red Bull has.

Crytzer, a long-time adventure racer himself, is also founder and president of American Adventure Sports, a Pennsylvania-based company that produces races, children's

camp and corporate team building events. He notes, "Red Bull has built their entire identity around the sponsorship of extreme athletes – and it's worked very, very well for them. They have shown that if you have a BMXer or a rock climber or kayaker, they're going to draw attention to your brand. There are so many brands that would profit from association with adventure sports. More companies should be doing it, like Gatorade, for example, or Nissan, with their Xterra model. We are becoming an alternative sport nation, and they are an affordable marketing choice for a lot of companies."

But the simple good value corporations receive when sponsoring alternative athletes is not the only draw. Savvy businesses – such as Brooks running shoes – use athletes not only to market their goods, but also help them develop and refine new products. Who better to help perfect climbing gear, or trail bikes, or kayaks, than the people who use them professionally, in the toughest environments and most punishing manner imaginable?

Pitt, winner of the 2008 Collegiate National Championship Sprint Adventure Race, believes there is another advantage for corporations willing to think outside the box and put a bit of their advertising budget into extreme athlete sponsorship. A senior majoring in environmental health and communications studies at Maryland's Towson University, she says, "Clearly, there is increasing value being placed on preserving unspoiled nature. Certainly many companies are emphasizing being green and sustainable, which has been shown to be a valuable marketing tool. Adventure athletes



have an appreciation for nature and adventure sports themselves are environmentally friendly, so the association with adventure sports is a link to the environment and an opportunity to expand on that type of successful marketing.”

And then there are the less obvious but still tangible benefits marketing with alternative athletes – as opposed to mainstream sports celebs – provide. Alternative athletes are down to earth. They are approachable. They tend to treat their bodies less as amusement parks and more as temples. They are, to use that much-maligned phrase, role models. They’re even happy to hang out and jaw with fans and fellow athletes about just about anything. Including how great their sponsor’s gear is.

As Eskelson, a major in the U.S. Army who has been racing for over a decade, muses, “We’re drama-free, fun-loving individuals with a quest to live life to the fullest and a lust for racing in some of the wild-

est places left on earth. Plus we provide great PR by actually using our sponsor’s gear and wearing the logos – and we’re great at the gift of gab, which translate into magnificent word-of-mouth advertising and positive PR!” (Adventure athletes are also an extra-tough breed; Eskelson broke his leg in four places during last year’s Primal Quest race, yet still managed to make it across the finish line.)

Extreme athletes seem to lack the sense of entitlement so common to so many professional sports stars, and even rarer, they are actually grateful for sponsorship. Competing in adventure sports is an expensive proposition. In addition to all the necessary equipment – most of which isn’t cheap – there are fees to enter races, as well as travel costs to consider. It can add up pretty quickly, and when a company like SOG steps in and offers to take care of all of that, it means athletes are able to enter more events. They are able to do what they love most in the world more often – and to be-

come more proficient at it.

That, says Adam Cott, makes “those involved with the sport very responsive to sponsors and supportive of them.” As the president of In Record Time, the marketing agency that is working with SOG on the Team SOG sponsorship, he has seen firsthand how “the passion of the athletes in endurance sports and that of those who follow them is a very important asset for marketers. We as marketers strive for effective forms of engagement with a target audience and the level of passion that exists in these sports makes for an environment that is ideal for creating that engagement between sponsor and athletes. Additionally, for many emerging endurance sports that are looking to further establish themselves, the support of sponsors is crucial. It really is an ideal relationship, for example, for a brand like SOG and adventure racing.”

Adventure racers as a whole are pretty sharp individuals – at least the successful ones. (It is a sport in which and experience and brains count for about as much as pure brawn, which is why there are so many adventure racers sporting grey hair.) When the time came for the USARA national championship in Pilot Point, Texas last October, Baker brought his new knife: A SOG Fatcat. And it saved his team’s collective butts.

As Mayer explains, “We were riding along an extremely muddy trail, and our bikes were really building up mud. All of a sudden, we heard a loud crack. Baker’s derailleur hanger had broken. But we’d actually had this happen in a previous race this year, so we’d started car-

rying universal derailleur hangers as a backup.” Unfortunately, however, the team soon discovered the universal derailleur hanger didn’t fit Baker’s bike. How, they wondered, were they going to finish the race? And then, describes Mayer, “Baker pulled out his beast SOG knife and starts shaving the aluminum part in hopes that he could make it fit. And he did! It took about an hour, but this was much better than the alternative of having to DNF (Did Not Finish) the race.”

Indeed, Team SOG had done so well throughout the season that, despite the hiccup in Texas, they still managed to take second place in the USARA National Point Series. And SOG Knives, whose support enabled the trio to compete on a national level, also quite concretely made it possible for the team to finish the championship race. Baker, like the rest of Team SOG, is helping to spread the word: “I’ve told everyone I’ve talked to about nationals how this knife kept us from DNFing,” he says. “I love my SOG knife. I really do. And I love talking about it. I carry it to every outdoor event I attend. It’s big and it’s flashy and it turns heads. People ask me about it and I tell them SOG is what’s up, and they make a quality product.”

And so, as Baker, Belt and the rest of the lineup prepare for the 2010 season, the perfect synergy, - the ideal meshing of sponsor and athlete - continues for SOG Specialty Knives and Tools and Team SOG. Gatorade, are you listening?

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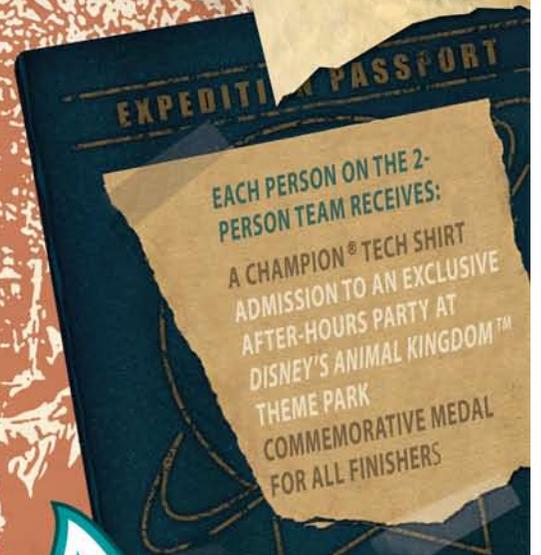
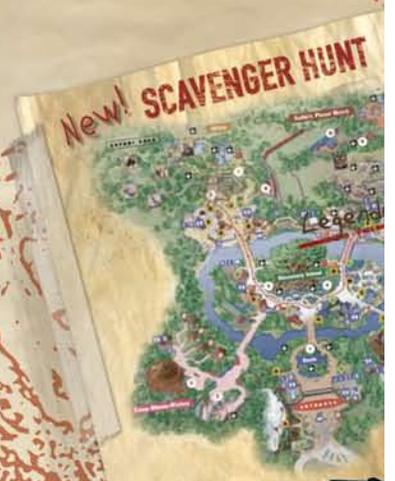
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USARA 2009 National Championship

Pilot Point, TX • October 22-24

Story by Tom Smith • Team Dark Horse Masters

It's been raining for two weeks in north Texas. In the last 48 hours it's rained 5 inches. The 2009 USARA 24 Hours National Championship is supposed to take place in and around Lake Ray Roberts. The problem is nobody is exactly sure where the shoreline for Lake Ray Roberts is anymore. UTM coordinates that were once on the shore are now 100 yards out in the lake. The race directors are scrambling around trying to salvage the course. Now the wind is blowing 25 mph and there are whitecaps on the lake.

David, Mary and I are holed up in our room watching countless episodes of Duck Commander and Whitetail Massacre (OK – first one is real, second one is a guess). I have seen so many ducks blasted from the sky and deer pierced with arrows or lured to a blind with girl deer scent and then dropped in a hail of lead that I am thinking of becoming a vegan.

Not David, he wants to see if the local convenience store sells rifles. Mary is now sleeping up to 16 hours

a day and has taken to accusing me of setting alarms just to annoy her. I am re-reading a 4-day old New York Times for the 5th time. The room seems small.

Finally the race directors get a course together that works and tell us to pick up the maps at 5:00 a.m. on race day. A lot of racers are disappointed that the original start, a paddle across the lake, has been canceled and instead we will bike around it.

I wasn't one of them.

The Start - 7:09 a.m. Elapsed Time 00:00

It was dark, windy and cold when the gun went off (reflexively I looked for the dead deer...). Almost 70 teams poured out from under the start banner and bolted down the driveway of Lantana's, the host hotel, about 300 yards to where our bikes awaited. With 200 red taillights flashing it looked like we were running into a multiple car pile-up.

Mary, David and I had agreed that we wouldn't bolt to the bikes. Yeah, right. David is genetically incapable of holding back. I have hit my max heart rate 2 minutes into a 24-hour race more times than I can count. Mary and I stick to the plan and arrive at the bikes a few seconds behind David. We were on the bikes and headed out the long entrance road to Lantana's, towards the town of Pilot Point.

We grab the wheel of a group that forms in front of us and confirm we are all together. I know we are going to the front of the race in the next few miles; it is all David can do to give us five minutes to warm up. He is itching to go...

Town of Pilot Point - 7:21 a.m. Elapsed time: 0 hours 12 minutes

It's only 3 miles into town and we are there very quickly. We have already bridged up one or two packs of riders. We hit the crossroads near the center of town; it's deserted at this hour. Actually it's deserted at almost any hour.

Photos courtesy of bobcat13 photography



One of the great things about Adventure Racing is the map work you need to do. Unlike a road map a USGS topographic map shows a depth of information about an area that can read like a history book. The USGS Maps of the Pilot Point area tell a sad tale. Lake Ray Roberts is an artificial lake, created about 15 years ago. It buried a number of small towns and roads. Where once Pilot Point was a thriving small town at the crossroads of Rt.455 and Rt.99 it now sat on the eastern edge of a large lake, to the west Rt.455 was underwater. Pilot Point was no longer a crossroads. To add insult to injury the highway to the east of Pilot Point was actually a bypass. Rt.99 technically still ran through town but no one speeding by on the integrated bypass would ever see the old-fashioned town square with the gazebo and historic buildings. Pilot Point was a crossroads town without the crossroads.

We turned onto the main highway and rode a few miles in the peloton. It was not long before David was on the front again, he could see another group down the road. He kept

looking back at me the way your dog does when he's standing at the door and wants to go out for a run. Mary was good to go, she can sustain any pace we can put out, for as long as she wants, but she can't bolt off the front. Mary tucked in tight on my wheel, I give David the nod and... we are off.

We bridge up and David wants to attack the next group immediately. It's about 400 yards to gap across and to give David a break I lead this one out. Giddy up...

It's a long, hard pull. Once you go there's no stopping, you either reach the draft of the next pack or burn out and drop back into the chase group. I didn't have much left when I caught the wheel of the trailing rider. This new expanded peloton caught another group and amazingly blew right through the middle of it, out the front, and up the road. We sucked wheel right up to the lead peloton, and settled in.

A team from Austin did most of the work and while they made a few moves to drop the pack David reeled them back in each time.

They couldn't establish a break and sustain it. The pace was punishing, over 20 mph on fat-tired mountain bikes.

Paved Road from Tioga - 7:50 a.m.

Elapsed time: 0 hours 41 minutes

There is something about a fast peloton that is thrilling to be part of. A dozen or more chains all whirring out a steady rhythm; pedals turning a fast cadence, tires thrumming on the road. The pack has a life and energy of its own. There is an excitement to being six inches off the wheel in front and know that you've got riders right on your wheel. If someone makes a mistake the whole pack is going down in a thrashing heap of metal and spandex. This group was fast and experienced. We were flying down the road. Was there much sense to this? Not really. Sure was fun though.

“Flat”!!!!

It took me a second to realize that it was David yelling “flat”. Turns out he had hit a piece of lumber he hadn't seen and his tire went down immediately. This wasn't our first rodeo so as disappointing as it was to watch every team in the race roll by us we didn't panic. We started eating. It's a 30-hour race, 10 minutes wasn't going to make much difference. We fixed the flat and rode the last few miles to CP1, the put-in location for the paddle section of the race.

Checkpoint 1 - 8:30 a.m.

Elapsed Time 01 hour 21 minutes

As much as we love to ride our bikes we do not like to paddle. It's cold and wet and slow... That's why it came as no surprise when David pulled the boat out at CP 2, threw it on his shoulders and ran down the road with it. Screw this, he'd rather run to CP3 with the canoe on his head. Mary and I ran along behind with the paddles and gear trying to keep up.

The paddle course was a series of long, deep coves (between 2 and 6 kilometers deep) separated by peninsulas. It was possible to portage over the peninsula rather than canoe back out of the cove and up the next one. The wind was howling. I'm not sure we gained anything with this but we weren't paddling and there is something to be said for that.

CP 5 - 11:43 a.m.

Elapsed Time 04 hours 32 minutes

We paddled towards CP5 after punching CP3 (not sure why CP4 was not next) but made a strategic error when we changed our minds and headed for CP4 instead, thinking we would portage backwards to CP5. We were probably too close to CP5 for this to be effective and changed our minds again, beached the boat and decided to run to both CP's. Bad idea. Did I mention we hate to paddle?

We did get to CP5 after a little bushwhack and some land navigation. We even passed under a deer blind, which made us all very nervous. Over the last few days we'd watched a few hundred deer get blown onto the next plane of existence from one of these.

We confused a lot of teams portaging across the peninsula who wondered where our boat was (we checked, this was legal) but it was time consuming and ultimately we decided to skip CP4 and not risk the enormous penalty for getting back to the launch after 3:00 p.m.

The race was rogaie format. That means many of the CP's are not mandatory. You were scored on how many points you got and then how quickly you finished. There were close to 50 points in the race so our thought was only a few teams would get them all. For reasons not apparent at the time this turned out to be a poor strategy.

We paddled 2 hours back to the launch point, punched out of CP6, which was the same location as CP1, and grabbed our bikes. We decided that this was also a good time to address David's soft tire. We had used a CO2 cartridge to inflate it but he has 29" wheels and it was only partially inflated. We used another CO2 cartridge to fully inflate the tire, popped the clutch and left the TA, tires screaming, rubber burning and smoke billowing out

from under our wheels... yeah, just like that.

CP7 and CP13 were in the same parking lot 2k up the road from the boat launch. The idea is to punch CP7, go get 8,9,10,11,12 and come back for CP13. The route to CP8 is a muddy track that provides our first opportunity to enjoy the results of all the rain we've had. Sections of this track are a mess; we churn through six-inch deep mud while generating enough wattage to power a small town. It was painfully slow.

CP8 - 2:36 p.m.

Elapsed Time 07 hours 27 minutes

We dropped our bikes in an old cul-de-sac and headed south on foot into a peninsula about 2k long and 1k wide. That's not a big area but the distance was not the issue. The peninsula was covered in thorn bush, thorn tree, thorn grass, thorn shrub...ouch. It also had not always been a peninsula.

I don't get to use the word "post apocalyptic" in race reports much



so I am going to go ahead and take the opportunity now.

At one point this peninsula had just been a high point of ground that Route 455 (yup, same Rt.455 that will eventually not go to Pilot Point anymore) passed over.

While the peninsula is badly overgrown with bramble and brush there is a section right through the middle that is clearly an old raised roadbed. It still has road signs. In the middle of nowhere, brush and grass waist high, there is a speed limit sign. Incongruous is the word that comes to mind. Better yet, there are a bunch of streetlights. There is no road; they must have torn out all the pavement. It looks like the ruins of some long lost civilization, now overgrown and forgotten. Kind of a Texas Macchu Pichu.

The Dark Horse is subsequently ripped to shreds. We are scratched, stabbed and punctured from head to toe. We are moving with a number of other teams, both the Granite AR teams, EMS and ATP. It is slow going and since there is almost no elevation differential David is navigating by compass bearing, forcing us to bushwhack this nasty stuff.

We move through CP12, 11 and 10, doing them in reverse order. When we head out to the end of the peninsula for CP9 it gets really bad. We are practically crawling through dense thorn thickets. My new arm and leg warmers are shredded. I am used to losing equipment to this sport but these are brand new. I am being flayed alive along with my beloved gear. I despair.

Mary eventually spots CP9 hanging on a tree along the shore. Mary



is quietly being sliced and diced without complaint. It takes a lot of faith to believe this much misery is part of the course. Mary never second guess's the navigator. She does not want the job. The good news is we are done with the O-course; the bad news is we are 2k of thorn bush from the TA. We bash our way back out. It is so thick that at one point a lively discussion ensues between David and I as to which way is out. We put our heads down and fight our way through. It's painful. Besides the puncture wounds up and down my legs I am bleeding from multiple scalp and facial lacerations. I look like I ran through a plate glass window. As always injury and bleeding are a great source of amusement for our team and the blood pouring from my face cheers everyone up.

As we near CP8 to pick up our bikes a woman on another team just headed in to the O-course hands me her helmet and asks me to drop it back at the TA. I hand it back.

"Keep it, you are going to need it."

Mary nods emphatically in agree-

ment. The girl looks worried. She should be.

We ride back on the trails to CP7/13 and punch CP13. The bikes are a mess now. The mud is balled up in the front derailleur and the entire frame is caked in it. I am amazed the bike is shifting at all. My rear wheel is jammed in a viscous blob of mud. Each time I hit another mud pit I have to overcome not only the mud under my wheel but also the mud that spins up and jams the seat stays between the v-brakes. Occasionally I jump off the bike and shovel some mud out of the frame. Summoning the required power to stay upright is touch and go.

Later, when I tell my son how hard it was to pedal through this muck he says: "It helps to view the mud problem as sliding friction applied to both wheels and where your seat stays jammed rather than as rolling resistance: think $[F/\text{pedals} - \mu(m_1+m_2)(9.8)] / m_1+m_2 = a$ "

That helps a whole bunch. We were viewing it more like this: "G#%\$#mn F*#&\$ng mud!!!"

CP 14 - 5:27 p.m.

Elapsed time 10 hours 18 minutes.

Lone Oak Vineyards

CP14 is the start of another foot orienteering section and a short road ride from CP13. We are given a new punch card and a new map just for this section. It is still light out and David knocks this O-course out quickly. There are 10

points but they are tightly spaced in fairly open ground. The rolling terrain is actually fairly pleasant, some woodland, open grass fields and best of all, no thorns. It presents few problems and at 6:28 p.m., nearly dusk, we are back on the bikes and rolling towards CP15.

CP15 is back around the lake and we basically retrace our route from this morning only this time it is all

right turns instead of left. It's an uneventful ride and except for the dead skunk David thumps in the twilight we are through the town of Tioga in 45 minutes of hard riding.

The CP is at the end of a long peninsula a few kilometers off the main route back to Pilot Point. David locates the correct gravel track out of Tioga and we ride about 3k to the end of it. We have been talking about skipping this point as well. We have hit 24 of the 47 points but 10 of them were on the O-course and we got them in under an hour. There don't seem to be any more concentrated points like that and navigation will be slow in the dark and cold. This point might take over an hour by itself.

When the road ends we ditch the bikes and meet a number of teams coming out of the underbrush. First out is Surly Joe from EMS Masters; besides sporting a consistently sunny disposition he is also an expert navigator. He indicated it will be a nasty 1-hour round trip through thorn bush. We want none of that. I still look like I have lost a cage match with a coked up bobcat. A quick vote sends the Dark Horse back to their bikes and on down the road.

For the same unforeseen reasons that skipping CP4 is a bad idea, skipping CP15 is too.

Gas Mart - 8:17 p.m.

Elapsed time: 13hours 08 minutes

“I need to eat”

We are cruising down Route 99 at a pretty good clip drafting off another team, just approaching the turn





into Pilot Point, when David says this. The Inuit people have dozens of words to describe snow. David has that many ways to describe eating.

It is a poorly kept secret that I carry enough food for both of us. He has a big block 8-cylinder engine that requires enormous amounts of fuel to keep fired up. If the tank starts to run dry he puts on his grumpy pants and the fun-o-meter plummets.

Mary and I eat exactly the same, 200 calories an hour of high-energy race food. Gel blocs, Power bars, Clif Roxs, etc. David can and will eat that but he does so grudgingly. Mary and I just feed him whatever we are eating. If he gets hungry he says so.

When he says: “I need to eat”, he is talking about something else. He wants to fill up the reserve tanks. He needs real food. Luckily just as we hit the turn into Pilots Point we realize that the gas station is also a Pizza Express and a Churches Chicken. We park the bikes and David orders two pizzas. The guy says he can have them done in 10

minutes. When David walks away to check out the chicken I slip the guy a couple bucks and tell him to bring them out in 5 minutes. David comes back with a whole chicken dinner, figuring he will get that in while he waits for the pizza.

Mary has some chicken with gravy while explaining that she is a vegetarian. I am flabbergasted. The two of us have been in Texas since Tuesday and she has consumed a flock of chickens in that time. Between mouthfuls of fried chicken she explains that she is more of a home state vegetarian. Oh...

The pizzas comes and David eats them both. Mary gets a slice down too. I would dearly love to eat a slice of pizza. I am dizzy with pizza lust...

Unfortunately I have recurring nightmares about the last pizza I ate in an adventure race. The little town of Fortuna, Costa Rica remembers it too. I believe they still refer to it as “El Chernobyl pequeno”.

David has consumed roughly 4,500 calories in 15 minutes. Mary and I

combined will barely get that down in 30 hours. I waver on the fine line between disgust and jealousy.

Team Bloat rolls out into the night and wobbles down the road towards the TA at CP16.

CP16: Lantanas Resort - 9:21 p.m.
Elapsed time: 14 hours 12 minutes.

CP16 is back at the lodge where the race started. There is no particular point to this but it is a great opportunity to drop the paddles we have been carrying all day (by “we” I mean “David”, I’m not actually carrying them). We also refill our water bottles, re-supply the food bag and change out some clothes. It is getting cold and will get a lot colder as the night deepens.

We are back on the eastern side of the lake and headed south on our bikes via a muddy equestrian track to gather up CP’s 17 through 31. CP 32 will again be back at Lantanas. We’ll be back, but not until tomorrow morning sometime.

The horse track is a mess from all the bikes that have traveled over it. Some of it is just wet; some of it is a deep, muddy, wheel sucking bog. The mud is a deep brown clay that sticks to everything like axle grease. We each develop our own technique for dealing with it. David and I tend to hit it head on, trying to use sheer mass and power to overcome the suction. Our back wheels are spinning at twice the rate of the front wheel. Once in it you want to do everything you can to stay on the bike. If the bike stops you are going in the bog. Mary, the more skilled rider, uses an avoid-

ance technique. She tries to get around the edge of it. When that fails she spins the wheel until she comes out. When I try this the bike goes everywhere, it's like trying to ride an angry squirrel.

David locates CP17 quickly, not surprisingly it's in a thorn bush. We ride another 3k and punch in at CP18. This is also the location of CP28, we need to continue on the bike to get CP's 19-27 and then come back here for a foot orienteering section.

We hook up with Jen Shultis, Jeff Woods and Surly Joe from Team EMS and grab points 19, 20 and 21. None of these are very difficult to locate and CP21 is also a double CP. We will come back through the same point as CP27.

CP 21 - 11:18 p.m.
Elapsed time: 16 hours 9 minutes

Team EMS continues on while we fix another flat David has developed. An interesting debate with the CP staff ensues. It turns out they have a foot pump. This would save our remaining CO2 and a lot of time. They aren't sure that's legal. David, a software engineer during the day, is also one of the few practicing Adventure Racing attorneys in the country.

"Is this pump available to all the teams in the race?"

"Yes, but they don't know it's here."

"Could they know of it if they

asked?"

"Uh... I guess so."

"Then the pump is in the public domain and is a legal part of the race course under the rule of universal access..."

It turned out Troy, the race director, was standing about 20 feet away so I asked him:

"Yeah, sure."

David's bike is a 29'er and we have already used his spare tube. We patch the one we took out earlier and re-inflate it. It won't hold air. We pull it out and start again. We use a 26" tube in his 29'er. This will work but it sucks to install. It

Continued on page 19

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takes about 20 minutes and we are rolling. The down side is Mary and I are freezing. We are dressed for racing, not flat repair.

The temperature is now 40 degrees, our feet are soaked from the mud and they are rapidly going numb. It is a long ride on a hard packed gravel road but at least the mud isn't too bad. CP22 is on a hilltop (elevation gain of 120', but the only hill we've seen so far). While Mary and I have changed to our trekking shoes a few times, David had just picked his up at the CP16 TA. He was pretty excited about getting out of the bike shoes and putting on some dry shoes.

We drop the bikes, locate CP22 and get back on the bikes. This takes about 10 minutes and David is noticeably disappointed. He puts his cold, wet, muddy bike shoes back on and we slide down the hill on our mud jammed bikes.

CP23 is further along the same track going south and it also marks the entrance to an open grass path marked as an "easement" on our maps. CP24 will be located a little more than 1k out this easement. Then we will need to come back to the main track.

Mary does not like this easement. Mary doesn't complain much but she really had an issue with this easement. When we located it there were a dozen bikes dropped there. It was rideable so we continued along it. We had to push a few really swampy parts, some of it knee deep. We eventually did drop the bikes and walk the last 1/2k with David insisting it was absolutely rideable and Mary equally sure we would be sorry. I have no position

on the subject. Her problem: she thought it was full of thorns.

She was right.

CP24 - 2:12 a.m.

Elapsed time: 19 hours 03 minutes.

We punch CP24 on a small rock outcropping and trot back to the bikes. We push the bikes back to the gravel road. David's tire has gone flat. This is our last tube and CO2 cartridge. The inflation device blows apart and shrapnel scatters into the mud. I have a mini-pump and we use this to inflate the tire. The mini-pump is really for emergency use only; it's the size of a large pen. It's like trying to eat an elephant with a spoon. It takes forever.

We are back on the bike briefly when David notices his rear tire is going flat as well. We are out of tubes and CO2. We use the mini-pump to inflate it and ride the remaining 4k to CP25. It turns out

CP26 was lost in the flood and we don't need to get it. It's a long way back to the finish line so we need to address the leak in David's tire. We patched the last one we pulled out and we use this while also patching the one we remove. It holds and we inflate it with the mini-pump. It takes forever.

Mary has been hiding in the outhouse trying to stay warm. It makes me sad that Mary has to choose between sitting in the stench of a park outhouse or freezing to death. Mary mentions that our suffering is the result of willful misconduct on the easement. It is very cold.

We mount up and head back north the 15k to CP21/27. A bit more than halfway back we cross a road and a concrete footbridge. We stop to try and get some feeling back in our feet and eat. It's after 3:00 a.m. and we are fading from cold and lack of food. When I get back on the bike my front wheel is flat.

That's disappointing.



I remove the wheel and tube but all we have left is tubes with patches. There are some teams passing by and David begs for a tube while I pull the flat one out. He snares one from Berlin Bike (thanks Ben!). I notice while I am doing this Mary runs by every few minutes. It's a little surreal; her legs appear in my headlamp as I am bent over the wheel, first running north, then south. My feet are like blocks of wood and my hands are shaking so badly that the mini-pump is filling the tire more from the shaking than any coordinated pumping on my part. It takes forever.

We get going again and for the first few minutes I ride like a Popsicle. I start to warm up but in the perverse world of cold weather mountain biking the effort that warms me up means a wind chill that freezes my feet. It's a quiet ride back to CP27. It's dead flat and with just a small cone of light from our headlamps and the whirring of our chains in the night its possible to believe we are standing still, and the landscape is rushing by us.

CP28 - 4:55 a.m.

Elapsed time: 21 hours 46 minutes

We drop the bikes and start a 3-point orienteering course on foot. It is nice to take the pressure off the balls of our feet for a while. According to my bike computer we have clocked upwards of 100 miles so far.

While I don't mind being on foot I am not too excited about spending any more time in a Texas thorn bush. Turns out there are worse things than a thorn bush when the temperature is hovering just above



freezing. You could go swimming. CP31 (we are getting them in reverse) is in the middle of a pond. There are teams standing around pointing lights at it hoping some idiot on their team is going to volunteer to swim out to get it. I recognize instantly that I am that idiot. Here's how I deduced this:

- 1 - Mary's not going to do this.
- 2 - David's not going to do this.

I get started immediately. It won't get better with time. I plunge knee deep onto a grassy spit of thorn bush (what else), cross some chest deep water and reach the little clump of brush the CP is hanging in. There's a guy already there and he punches both our CP cards and we wade back to shore. I have a moment of concern because you must punch the card in the exact box and it must be done correctly. This is the only one I did not personally witness. I can't see the pinholes that well and I hope it's correct. It's not.

The Dark Horse starts bushwhacking towards CP30 and things break bad almost instantly. Within 100 meters we are jammed in a thicket

of brush. It is nearly impenetrable. What little skin and clothing that remains is being removed in small strips. We bail on this plan after bashing our way around in the dark for a while. We change tactics and head for CP29. This will allow us to come at CP30 from the south and over high ground, hopefully with fewer brambles.

CP29 - 7:15 a.m.

Elapsed time: 24 hours 6 minutes

We locate CP29 after a short search and with the sun peeking over the horizon we locate the low ridge that will allow us to get out to CP30 without fighting through the low brush. We punch it and are back to the bikes in time to enjoy a little warmth from the sun as it climbs into the sky.

The TA volunteers have a surprise for us. The next CP is back at Lantanas, CP32. They inform us that the remaining 5CP's have been removed from the race. CP32 is now the finish. We are done. While we are glad to hear we just need to ride back to Lantanas to finish, it blows

up our CP strategy. By skipping two difficult points earlier we had hoped to clear the remainder of the course and place ahead of teams that run out of time. A rogaine style course is designed to encourage teams to manage their route wisely. It is time limited with huge penalties for getting in after the cutoff. I have never heard of a rogaine that has the last 5 points removed. There is no way to score it.

We will worry about that issue later. At this point we need to ride about 5 miles and we can eat breakfast. We focus on that. We will be riding back on the same nasty, muddy horse track we came in on. It is going to be a slog and now its been torn up by a couple hundred bikes going in both directions. We roll out with smiles. It's warming up, we are riding towards the "all you can eat \$9.99 brunch" special at the hotel. A little mud isn't going to kill us.

Or maybe it is.

We are enjoying a series of horrendous mud pits while David shoots some video and takes pictures. At some point he hits a deep section, his bike bogs down, skews sideways off the track and pulls a stick through the rear derailleur. The derailleur is toast. It is wound around his spokes and badly broken. That is unfortunate.

We push through the bogs and work out a towing system for the dry parts (not a lot of dry parts). He uses the bike like a scooter, I ride up alongside and he grabs my pack, I pedal like crazy. A couple of times our timing is off and I am almost yanked out of the saddle trying to accelerate David's pizza enhanced

mass to escape velocity. In general it's pretty amusing.

Knowing that brunch was a short ride away made these last few kilometers drag on forever. The mud and the pushing made for very slow progress. Just as we hit the road Patrick Harper, a friend and race official came running down the trail. He was getting in some training and saw an opportunity to work on his power. We covered the last 1/2 kilometer up the hill to the finish with me towing, Mary pushing and Patrick running behind us pushing the whole clown show across the finish line.

Was this cheating? No. Patrick was available for all the teams if they wanted a push. There was universal Patrick access.

Finish - 10:12 a.m.

Elapsed time: 27 hours 3 minutes

It's not until you cross the finish line that you realize just how tired, dirty and hungry you are. Thinking about it beforehand is counter-productive. I had one more task to complete: turn in the punch card. I took it in the barn and watched as they tallied up the points.

"You didn't get CP31"

"Umm... yeah, pretty sure I remember being up to my pie hole in a pond."

"It's not punched right, the pin pattern is off."

"Well, it was dark, I was freezing to death and I was standing in a muddy cow pond with a thousand open wounds on my body. I wasn't

focusing on the pin pattern."

Luckily Troy was standing nearby. I asked for a judgment.
"Yeah, sure."

Time for brunch and a nap.

Post race:

Team Dark Horse finished 3rd in the Masters Division. We carried off a pile of booty at the awards. The shortened course made no difference in our ranking. Teams behind us had the same or fewer points. There's no doubt the flat tires killed us but that's part of racing. Next year we ride tubeless with sealant (which is why Mary had no flats).

Our thanks to the USARA organization and especially to Scott and Kat who had to design and redesign the course a half dozen times in the 36 hours before the race. Great job and thanks for a tour of the monster motor home!



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Team Granite AR

Interview with Dave Romilly of the 2009 USARA National Champions

Can you give us a short history of the team?

Unfortunately, since we assembled at the end of 2008, there is not a lot of history to tell. Our team is formed of dedicated athletes who have had success / succeeded in individual events and whom have been members / part of various other very successful teams. We feel we have assembled a strong group of passionate athletes with a common interest in having fun and enjoying the task at hand. There are no chiefs on the tribe and we check all ego's at the door when we lace up our racing/training shoes.

We knew that our first season racing together 2009 would be our inaugural season and consequently set mild goals throughout the year. Our goal was to compete at the USARA qualifying events (Bitter Pill and Racing Ahead) with the hope of landing / qualifying for a

chance at the National Championships in Pilot Point, Texas. Without major sponsorship to help offset the high cost of travel to / from races we could not afford to make the trips to the mid-coast/southeast for the Checkpoint Tracker events. Therefore, we eyed the USARA events and tried to qualify for Nationals at our local races in order to make our bid at the title. Our intent is to make the 2010 season a bit more expansive and see what type of impact that we can have on the National and International scene with the assistance of corporate partners.

The 2 teams crossed the finish line together, was this the team's strategy from the beginning?

Our goal from the gun was to race hard as a group of friends sharing the passion of exploring a new region of the country together. As a group of like minded and experi-

enced friends, some friendships started at the race, we wanted to share all the pain, misery and excitement the course had to offer. On the flip side, we were realistic to the goal of side-by-side racing, and knew that if one of the two team's had major issues, either mechanically or physically, the other would have to move on to avoid losing time. However, we broke our ground rules by stopping to wait for flats to be fixed and clothes/food to be retrieved during the frigid night hours. The bottom line being that we were having way to much fun to break up the squad.

What advantages did the team have doing this? Was either team a sacrificial team should the team be faced with an obstacle that would slow down the progress (i.e. failed equipment, etc...)?

Advantages ranged, but the most notable were that the jokes were a

Photo courtesy of bobcat13 photography

heck of a lot funnier. The caveat being that the joke teller had to make it good because 5 sets of ears were waiting for the punch-line.

How did the team perform leading up to this event in 2009?

1st - USARA 24-Hour Nationals, 1st - Bitter Pill 12-Hour, 2nd and 3rd - RacingAhead New Hampshire Adventure Weekend 12-Hour (Best 12-hour that we have completed in years), 2nd and 3rd - Tuckerman Inferno Pentathlon (Individual), 2nd - Sea to Summit Triathlon (Individual)

What was the hardest challenge for the team at this year's event?

The mesquite thorns, the barbed-wire thorns and the other thorns I can't describe with a simile. To top it off, a nice set of poison ivy to remind you of nature's defense mechanisms. Ten days of itchy skin compounded with foot long scratches, thank you Texas.

What was the highlight of the event?

Without doubt, crossing the finish line and celebrating with our teammates, Chad Denning's parents (Carol and Paul). They were vital in our preparation and post race recovery by supplying ample accommodations and tending to almost everything we needed outside of race prep. Additionally, they really enjoyed the experience as a first time support crew and it showed with their smiles and positive can-do attitude. We also capitalized on the unique scenery Texas had to offer. The sunsets that seemingly blended with the foreground of grazing cattle and white fences, the spire-like trees that jetted from the water after being dead and water logged for decades on end, and the

tangled maze of razor sharp trees that characterize the sweet flavors of the land.

If we looked in any given team member's pack for the race...what if anything would we be surprised to find?

Nestle Boost. I am surprised that other teams have not caught onto this little secret. I am talking about max amounts of key components (proteins, vitamins, minerals, and TASTE) to an adventure athlete's body crammed into 8-12 fluid ounces. I am telling whomever is listening, this stuff is intended for the endurance adventure athlete and should become a part of the primary packing list.

Did the team do anything special to prepare for this year's Nationals event?

We did a little bit of freaking out and had some anxious moments with regards to our final team roster, which was decided about a week before the race. Unfortunately, some personal issues forced us to strategize about whom would be racing and if we could field two teams. In hindsight, the energy spent making sure we had two strong teams representing the GRANITE State help mask the bouts of nerve and anxiety. Once the teams were accounted for, we did what most teams do - study every part of the gear list, pack and re-pack always second guessing if the mandatory gear is stowed away so as not to let a minor mental error cost the team valuable time. After that, try to crawl inside the head of the race director and pretend you know how the course will be constructed. The later usually ending in failure but is always fun to think of the possible permutations to the

race.

I noticed that not all of you are within the same geographic area... do you periodically get together as a team to train? What does the team's training consist of?

The two teammates from FL and NY are like family to the NH folks. Outside of competing together, training is tough but the email is always flowing with the latest epic event or training mission. Within the GRANITE State, teammates Dave Lamb, Dave Romilly and Chad Denning regularly get together for multi-hour missions that involve ridge runs, up-hill ski scrambles, paddling, bush wacking, exploring new areas, and mountain/road rides. If adventure racing were to end tomorrow, you could find our team at a trail head with all the gear we own planning some sort of crazy mission in its stead. One of our most memorable training missions of the past year was scaling Mt. Washington on the coldest day of the year with temperatures around minus 50-70F and winds upwards of 50-60 mph. Check out the picture at the summit on our website <http://teamgranite.weebly.com/images/video.html>.

If you could go back and do the race all over...is there anything that you would do differently?

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athlete interview

2009 USARA Collegiate National Champion: Brian Mayer of Team SOG

How long have you been racing?

Since my sophomore year of college, I am now a 2nd year Masters student, so 5 years. I was a boy scout and ran cross country in high school, which helped give me some of the needed skills.

You have had a great year, how did it start?

Last year ended with trying to qualify for nationals. We worked with Doug Crytzer to find sponsors and partners to help with funding for our race season. We are a young team and have the physical qualities, but were seeking for more experience. We really looked to expand our horizons by finding for more challenging races and more diverse competition.

You won the 2009 USARA Collegiate Nationals. Tell us about how that affected you?

Michael Stratton raced in Reno when Josh LaSov's team won the 2008 collegiate race. They both played a role in getting me to participate. It was a big trip, but the hype for the race and the prize package was huge. We traveled out west looking to grow our experience level and wanting to be a part of growing the collegiate category. At Virginia Tech, we do runs on Friday nights with maps and try to get lost, sometimes running around 10 hours or more. Blacksburg is an



outdoor oriented town and people are interested in challenging themselves.

You won the AIX prize package at Collegiate Nationals which was over \$5000 worth of money and prizes. How has this effected you? Any company willing to help on this level in a growing sport really shows their support and that's

great. Allowing us to do the things we need to do to grow as a team, is priceless. This is a great opportunity for a company to build a name within the sport. It also gives young racers motivation to make the effort to attend races like the USARA Collegiate Nationals and promotes competition within the race.

Did that sponsorship package play a role in helping you secure your current sponsor, SOG?

Yes. The title of “USARA Collegiate National Champions” was a very nice addition to our team’s resume. That title helped dictate assets to potential sponsors.

Your team was ranked the #1 team in the country going into the National Championship. How did that make you feel and what would you attribute that to?

Being ranked #1 in the country is a very cool feeling. Having the sponsorship added to our ability to race throughout the year. Doug Crytzer is very excited and has been a huge motivator for our team. While being ranked #1 is a great feeling, we feel that we missed certain things

in races and still have much room for improvement. We can get better and that is our goal every time we race.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

We really enjoy being a part of USARA events as they bring everything in the sport together. They recognize accomplishments, not just races. At the 2007 USARA National Championships in Potosi, Missouri, the diversity of teams and competition was very exciting for us. And it is great to see the Sprint and Collegiate Nationals grow into the same sort of diverse landscape of teams.

My teammate in the USARA Collegiate Nationals, Jen, was overwhelmed with how strong of a role

the team plays in our sport. As a professional Triathlete, she was excited to have someone to share the highs and lows with. These events provide a great opportunity to share our sport with all levels of participants.

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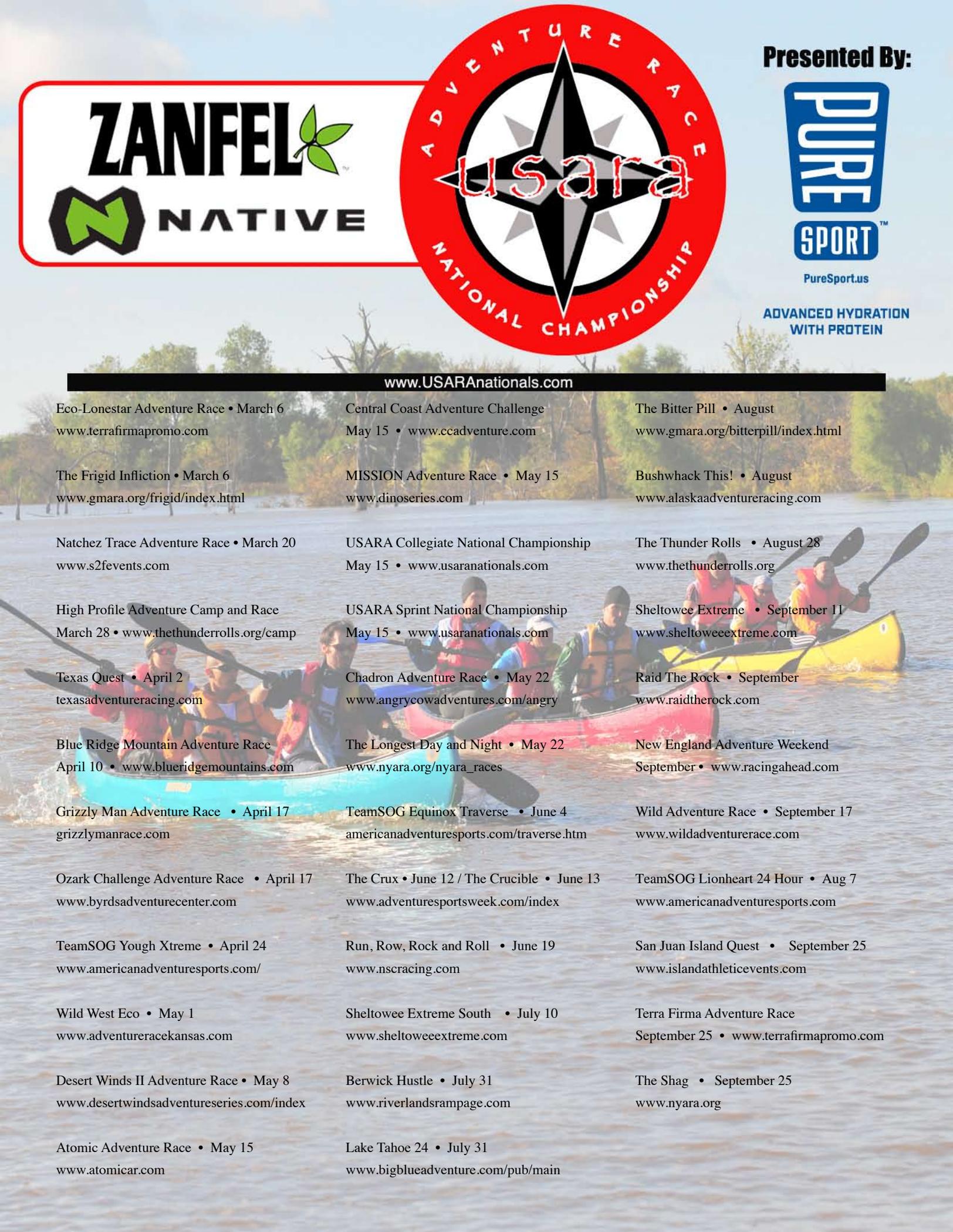
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Snowshoeing 101

By Adam W. Chase

For those averse to jeopardizing their conditioning from the fall training or racing season, snowshoeing and its many benefits is an attractive alternative to indoor tracks, treadmills, exercise cycles, rowing machines, Stairmasters, aerobics classes, and other indoor activities. For some multi-sport athletes, snowshoeing is not just for cross training anymore. From November through April, there are snowshoe races scheduled across the country almost every weekend. The race offerings include snowshoe “track and field” events, 5Ks, winter triathlons (ski, bike, snowshoe), quadrathlons (bike, run, ski, snowshoe), and ultra-distance races.

Snowshoeing uphill through heavy powder, especially at altitude, will drain your system and stress your

cardiovascular system more than almost any other type of workout. Snowshoeing is a wonderful way to build strength and fitness without straining those joints that are often battered during long road runs. It is also a terrific way to get away from the crowds and into the quiet of winter’s backcountry.

Distance runners and other endurance athletes may want to combine snowshoeing, trail and road running (when possible) and indoor track workouts to keep themselves fast and fit during the winter. If managed well, your snowshoe season should dovetail with your road and trail racing seasons because the strength and endurance gains of snowshoeing will complement running and cycling.

As a runner or multi-sport athlete, if you are just introducing yourself to snowshoeing, be ware that you

will be taxing different muscles and are likely to experience significant soreness during or after your maiden jaunt. Resistance training in the pre-season and stretching before and after snowshoeing will help to reduce that pain. Snowshoeing is a great source of strength training, particularly for your legs. Depending upon the terrain and snow conditions, you will work your hip flexors, quadriceps, gluteus maximus, gastrocnemius, abductors, adductors, and hamstrings. Snowshoeing also requires upper body strength for powering through powder, pumping up hills, and balancing on uneven snow.

If you are going to be snowshoeing at altitude, you should try to prepare for the season by maintaining a good endurance base. Do some trail runs or mountain bike rides in the high country in the late fall before the snow starts to fly. As

with most winter sports, warming up before you begin to exert yourself is crucial to your performance. According to Tom Sobal, the most victorious competitor in the sport of snowshoeing, failure to warm up properly is likely to result in injury, sub-maximal performance, and less enjoyment, whether you are training or racing. Sobal recommends starting out with an easy, slow pace that gradually increases to slightly faster than your anticipated pace. This should last between seven and fifteen minutes. After a couple short surges at an even faster pace, you should slow back down and quickly remove any excess clothing, adjust your equipment, and recover just before the start of your training or race.

I recommend water-resistant pants, such as those made of a microfiber material and that you close all of your pockets so that they do not fill up with flying snow. For shorter, more intense workouts or races, simple Lycra tights will probably suffice. Wool socks and, if the snow is deep, gaiters to protect your ankles from intruding snow, are also recommended. Unless you are hiking and not running on your snowshoes, running shoes are probably your best bet for footwear. Snow provides ample cushioning and the snowshoe will give you support and stability. If it is wet out, you should choose some shoes that have nylon or leather uppers and you might even want to apply some moisture block to them. Another tip is to select running shoes that have a rear lip on the outsole to prevent the snowshoe straps from slipping off.

Safety is vital when you out in the cold and unpredictable winter



weather, especially when in the backcountry. It is important to carry a compass, map, sun protection, and a first aid kit. Also, take an avalanche course, carry an avalanche beacon and shovel, and avoid steep slopes. Be cognizant that you will be burning more calories and require more liquids in the cold and/or high altitude, so carry extra food and water. Keep your liquids close to your body to prevent freezing.

If you use a hip-pack to hold your water bottle, remember to put the bottle in the holster upside down so the water will not freeze up and block the nozzle.

Other emergencies that you should try to prepare for include hypothermia and frostbite, altitude sickness, equipment failure, wildlife, and the dreaded drunken snowmobiler!

By Travis Macy

If you're looking to ramp up your fitness this winter and head into spring ready to race, then snowshoeing could be the sport for you. Here are five points to consider when getting started.

1. Gear Up. Buy, borrow, or rent a pair of lightweight, running-focused snowshoes. Redfeather got the ball rolling almost 20 years ago, and a number of companies now make high-quality racing snowshoes. Anything much larger than 8"x25" is probably too big if you're hoping to run. I generally race in the Northern Lites Elite for courses featuring powder and the Northern Lites Elite Racer for groomed courses. If you're serious about running fast, remove the bindings from your snowshoes and mount a lightweight pair of running shoes permanently to the snowshoes. Do this by drilling through the midsole and outsole and attaching with bolts, washers, and locking nuts.

2. Train Right. If you live in the mountains, nordic skiing, randonee skiing, and snowshoe running all offer great training for snowshoe races. If you only see snow at the snowshoe race itself, fear not! Running, cycling, and swimming all provide excellent carry-over fitness. Snowshoe racing is a high-end aerobic activity, so I recommend high-intensity, uphill intervals for running and biking. Most snowshoe races occur at altitude, so any training and/or sleeping up high is good.

3. Dress Appropriately. Many first-time snowshoers dress comfortably for downhill skiing, only to find themselves excruciatingly

overheated minutes into the workout or race. I recommend dressing lighter than you think you should—you should feel cool when waiting on the starting line. I generally wear a lightweight, wool base layer on top and bottom with thin windpants, another lightweight shirt, and a wind vest (a full, non-mesh back on the vest is crucial in keeping the flying snow off). Sunscreen and sunglasses are important.

4. Think Technique. Generally, running on snowshoes is just like running without snowshoes. You may need to widen your stride slightly to prevent the snowshoes from hitting your ankles. Running on uneven snow may feel a bit awkward at first; this will diminish with practice. Keep your ankles loose and expect a bit of twisting and turning (trail running year-round helps immensely here). On steep uphill, you can often travel just as fast and conserve energy by power hiking. Going downhill, lean back a bit, lift your knees, and allow the heel of the snowshoe to provide flotation.

5. To Pole or Not to Pole? For

snowshoers on a hike who may be unsure about balance, poles offer an added degree of stability. Adventure racing superstar Mike Kloser, who comes from a skiing background, uses nordic skiing poles when snowshoe racing because of the increased push when climbing. I come from a running background and do not use poles because they get in the way when descending. Give both options a try and decide for yourself!

Evergreen, Colorado's Travis Macy has won the Colorado Snowshoeing State Championship and the Turquoise Lake 20-Miler Snowshoe Race, among others. He adventure races with Team Merrell/Akali and teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic at Denver Academy High School. Feel free to follow Travis' adventures at www.followertravismacy.blogspot.com.



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We salute the ATP/Salomon team's accomplishment - ATP/Salomon racers are Scott Pleban [VA-USA], Leanne Mueller [ON-CA], Andrew Cameron [ON-CA], & Sean Roper [ON-CA].



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Preparing For The Unexplored

by Asa Burlin

The first edition of the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race took place in 2004 and has since been held annually with the exception of 2006 when there was a winter edition as well as the standard summer race. The teams consist of four people and must be mixed gender. The 2010 race will be held in the spirit of Chile's bicentennial celebrations and take place on the island of Tierra del Fuego, following in the footsteps of famous explorers Ferdinand Magellan and Charles Darwin. As usual, the exact course of the race is not revealed until the night before the race. The only prize in the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race is pride. Any profits made from the race are donated to Patagonian preservation funds.

How do you prepare for a challenge that will not only push your body to the limits of physical endurance, fatigue, sleep deprivation and cold weather, but also put your mental strength and team moral to a serious test?

For over a week.

Being in top physical shape is a necessary, yet small part of being prepared to embark on an adventure like the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race. Or as former contestant Michelle Maislen puts it, "the physique is maybe ten percent, the rest is all mental".

The Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race, held annually at the very southern tip of Chile, has been called the "adventure at the end of

the world" and "the last wild race". Offering its contestants a challenge few would accept and even fewer are able to finish, the race is more than a competition, it's a true adventure. The course of the race changes every year, taking the competing teams to new and unexplored territories of Chilean Patagonia where they have to hike, climb, mountain bike, repel and sea kayak in order to reach the finish line. The teams have ten days to complete the race, some make it, some don't.

Diversity being one of the key factors to succeed, one would guess the training has to be diverse as well. Druce Finlay is from the United States and a member of American/Argentinean team Calleva. Returning to take on the challenge once more, the 2010 edition will be

Finlay's second race in Patagonia. Also coming back to Patagonia for his second expedition race is Mark Humphrey, member of last years winning team HellyHansen/Prunesco from the United Kingdom. Michelle Maislen is from the United States but joined a Chilean team in 2005 to be able to participate in the race.

Having been involved with adventure racing for years, Finlay says he is constantly in training; paddling, running and biking. Team Calleva doesn't always train together; instead each member is responsible for their workouts. Finlay plans and is in charge of all his own training and sees no need for a coach, saying "No, why would I pay for someone else to tell me what I already know?"

Being an experienced adventure racer as well, Michelle Maislen prepared herself for her Patagonian adventure by training both alone and with other people in her area since the rest of her team was in Chile.

“I would mix my daily training with variety of activities like biking, running, hiking and kayaking, both at day and night time.”

She says she also practiced nighttime navigation and participated in a few shorter orienteering and adventure races, and found that this provided a strong foundation for her future racing.

Although used to being her own coach for years, Maislen just recently hired a personal coach for future racing. “And now I find him invaluable” she says “I would definitely recommend hiring a coach to anyone serious about seeing results.”

Mark Humphrey did definitely see the results of his training as his team crossed the finish line as the winners of last year’s race. Like Finlay, he has never had a coach and says that since all members of his team work full time, training is something each of them has to find time for themselves, although they do get together throughout the year and do other, shorter races together as a team.

Many athletes keep track of their training in logs or journals, and adventure racers are no different. Maislen keeps a journal to be able to overview her workload over time, see progress and set goals. Humphrey uses a 305 edge GPS device to keep track of heart rate, distance etc. for biking, running



Photo courtesy of Mark Watson

and kayaking. He says it helps him monitoring his overall performance at the same time as being a motivational tool.

When it comes to preparing for the mental strain of adventure racing, for most racers there is less of a training process. Says Maislen, “Mental toughness, I think, is something you’re either born with, develop early in life or gain through some dramatic experiences. In my case, I would participate in long and grueling training sessions to attempt a simulation of the harsh conditions we might face during the actual race.”

“I find that all the physical training I do somehow work as good mental training as well” says Mark Humphrey, “although having a new baby boy in my life now, I have definitely trained for the sleep deprivation part of this year’s race.”

Team work

The teams signing up for the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race are all formed in different ways. Maislen, eager to race but without a team, contacted the race director and was

put in contact with a local team missing a member. Druce Finlay was introduced to his team as an alternative racer through a good friend who was already a member. “Then the captain ended up getting injured and I got his spot on the team, I was able to join the team for a race back in Virginia about a month before heading to Patagonia so we all new each other pretty well.”

Mark Humphrey had raced with his team’s captain Nicola Macleod before entering the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race, but was only familiar with the other two team members from the UK adventure racing scene. This, he says, affected the team’s choice of captain, “Nicola took the role of team leader for organizational purposes, but during the race we all made collective decisions with each person making key decisions at different times”

When a race includes strategic decisions and navigation, Humphrey says it is essential to have a team leader to make the final call and prevent time wasting on decisions.



Team Calleva, whose original captain was injured, chose his replacement based on factors like age, experience and attitude. Says Finlay, “having a leader is always good for those final decisions.”

Maislen, agreeing that having a team leader is essential, tells us that in her team’s case, the choice of the captain was based not only on the fact that he was comfortable with the role and had experience, but a key factor was that he spoke both English and Spanish, making him crucial to the team’s overall communication.

However, she recalls that as the physical and mental exhaustion started taking its toll on her team mates, speaking English and translating what was said to her became harder.

“There were times during the race when we felt like the best of friends and other when I feared for our lives. The language barrier definitely made things a lot harder in the end of the race when the guys were simply too tired to translate for me.”

She says that mentally, that was the hardest part of the race for her.

“Not being able to fully communicate with your team and not being able to follow discussions leading up to important decisions, yes that was sometimes truly hard and frustrating.”

But besides the communication problems, she says there were plenty other factors to make the race an extreme challenge.

“Oh, the wet, the cold and the wind” she says, “day after day. Putting on wet clothes in the morning and then climbing in to a wet sleeping bag at night was definitely the hardest part, overall. I mean, it rained almost non stop for five days.”

As for Humphrey, the weather proved to be the worst enemy as well “Being really, really cold most nights and having no way of warming up...yeah, that was the hardest part for me.”

Mentally, he says the biggest challenge was to keep focus within the team even though they had no idea

how they were doing in comparison with the other contestants. Still, he tells us, they managed to keep their sense of humor and held together as a team even through the rough sports.

“you can eat non-stop”

Neither Maislen, Finlay or Humphrey say they did any major changes to their diet before the race. Maislen says that she ate more than usual to stockpile calories, but that was it.

“During the race we had bars that we’d eat during the day time and at night... I honestly cannot remember what we ate at night. That’s pretty scary considering we were out there for seven days” she says. As for Druce Finlay, he says he is on a warrior diet “I eat whatever I can get my hands on, barring certain things of course. In conjunction with modern supplements like hammer nutrition products, it works well for me.”

Humphrey sticks to “just normal food” at home and says the team shopped locally for foods to bring on the race. “When you travel overseas to race, your luggage is all gear, there’s no room for food.”

The obvious problem with the food situation during such a long race is that while needing lots of energy, the racers have to pack and carry everything they are going to eat. Making sure you have eaten well before the race is essential, just like eating is a big part of the recovery for most racers. Says Danish racer Claus Stallknecht who competed back in 2004 “Having successfully finished a race like this is an amazing feeling, you’re relieved, you’re happy, you’re proud, you have this



tremendous tiredness in your whole body and you can eat non stop.”

Heaven on earth

Looking back at the time after crossing the finish line, one thing that all racers remember is the scenery through which they passed.

“It was just such an epic event” says Druce Finlay, “its hard to pinpoint the greatest moment during the race, we had so many, like camping on the edge of a Glacier, on the only rock outcropping visible in every direction.”

“There was not a day that didn’t simply blow my mind” says Michelle Maislen, “Patagonia is just heaven on earth.” As for completing the race, she recalls “we were the last team to cross the finish line and all the other teams were waiting for us and cheering us on. I was so relieved and happy.”

Mark Humphrey recalls how the whole team was really excited to visit Patagonia for the first time and that it definitely didn’t let them down. He says winning in such a magical place was the best memory

he could have asked for.

2010

As for the upcoming race, in order to defend their title team Humphrey says team HellyHansen/Prunesco has done what they can to prepare themselves “We have been a bit more focused and have been talking about returning to the race this whole passed year. We have added some specialist training and really just tried to focus on the actual challenge.” In order to avoid being as cold as last year, the team has also had kit reviews with sponsors HellyHansen to make sure they bring suitable gear, helping them stay warm and dry.

The 2010 edition of the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race starts February 8th and will show whether Humphrey’s team are able to defend their title or if a new team will be first to cross the finish line. But as Druce Finlay puts it “racing in Patagonia is not for the faint hearted”, when it comes to a race as challenging as this, everyone is a winner.

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6/5/10 Saturday	Farragut Off-road Triathlon	Bayview, ID
6/6/10 Sunday	Mad Dash Mountain Bike Racing	Bayview, ID
6/12/10 Saturday	The Crux Adventure Races	Bayview, ID
6/13/10 Sunday	The Crucible Adventure Races	Bayview, ID
6/20/10 Sunday	Burton Creek Trail Marathon & 1/2 Marathon	Tahoe City, CA
6/20/10 Sunday	Burton Creek Trail 5 & 10K	Tahoe City, CA
6/26/10 Saturday	XTERRA Tahoe City	Tahoe City, CA
7/4/10 Sunday	Run To The Beach 5 & 10K	Kings Beach, CA
7/10/10 Saturday	OCEAN Blue Adventure Races	Half Moon Bay, CA
7/18/10 Sunday	Donner Lake Triathlon	Truckee, CA
7/31/10 Saturday	Lake Tahoe 24 Hour AR	Lake Tahoe, CA & NV
8/28/10 Saturday	XTERRA Lake Tahoe	Incline Village, NV
8/28/10 Saturday	Big Blue Adventure Trail 5 & 10K	Incline Village, NV
9/18/10 Saturday	Tahoe Big Blue Adventure Races	Truckee, CA
9/19/10 Sunday	Emerald Bay Trail Run	W. Shore Lake Tahoe

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Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge 2009



By Travis Macy • Photos by Monica Dalmasso

The Scene

In 1994, when I was 11 years old, I watched from the support car as my dad, Mark, ran 146 miles from Death Valley, California to the summit of Mt. Whitney, more than 14,000 feet above. The Badwater Ultramarathon is one of the hardest races on earth, and during those two days in the support car a lifelong reverence for the desert grew within me. While I always relished brief forays into the empty, dry spaces of North America, nothing I had done previously compared to what I would experience in Abu Dhabi in December of 2009.

Flying out of Denver International Airport just ahead of a looming snowstorm, I realized that missing a few good powder skiing days in Colorado was a small price to pay for a chance to race in the Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge, a six-day multisport race in some of the most inspiring, unique, and unforgiving terrain on earth. For the next week, I would run, bike, paddle, swim, and climb through the vast sand dunes, deserted trails, sprawling seas, steep cliffs, and

incredible cities that make Abu Dhabi a true treasure of the Middle East. Although the temperature at my house was well below freezing, I hoped that running through deep snow in the weeks before the race would prepare me for romping up and down sand dunes.

The Players

The stakes were high with 40 coed, four-person teams from 20 countries competing for the largest cash purse in adventure racing. Like most international adventure races, the field included a disproportionate number of Kiwis. Race-hardened in the unforgiving climate and steep hills of the Southlands, the experienced athletes of Team Qasr Al Sarab and Team ADCO (who had both gained the support of local sponsors for this race) could be expected to contend for podium positions. The Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge is a distant descendent of the original Raid Galouise and Raid World Championship, and a number of competitive French teams toed the line in an event organized by a French company called Community. Other familiar

faces included the Swedes of Team Lundhags Adventure and Spanish/French of Team Buff Thermocool. Strikingly absent were the Americans of Team Nike, the most successful adventure racing team in history, but interestingly present were the Germans of Team Abu Dhabi Triathlon. Led by Faris Al-Sultan, winner of Ironman Hawaii in 2005, this team of uber-triathletes generated whispers across the field and media before the race. *Would the fittest triathletes in the world have what it takes to complete a multi-day adventure race? Could they win?*

My contingency, Team Salomon/Crested Butte, was fit and ready to go. Although we had not raced together as a foursome, I had competed with each other member of the team in previous races and expected that we would work well together. Jon Brown, 38, team captain, lives in Gunnison, Colorado. A former professional mountain bike racer, Jon owns a small publishing company. He's consistent and level-headed, the quintessential teammate. Eric "Sully" Sullivan, 28,

also lives at altitude in Gunnison. An extremely talented, powerful racer, Sully never complains and does the little things every team needs to go faster. Denise McHale, 35, is a talented athlete and close friend from Canada's Yukon Territory. In preparation for Abu Dhabi, Denise won the Canadian 100 Kilometer Road Running Championship and logged hours "paddling" on an indoor machine after the water froze outside in September. I have been adventure racing professionally since 2005, and I also teach English, Literature, and Algebra II at Denver Academy High School in Colorado. After months of steady training out of my home at 8200 feet in Evergreen, Colorado, I was feeling strong and excited for a desert adventure!

Day 1: Full Speed Ahead in Abu Dhabi

Adventure Triathlon Prologue, 27km
Sea Kayaking, 33km

Many multi-day adventure races start with a leisurely pace as athletes settle into a sustainable rhythm to



The author, Travis Macy, at left.

hold over the next week. This was not the case at the 2009 Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge.

At the gun blast, 160 competitors shot off from the line on mountain bikes. With tires hyper-inflated to speed across 12 kilometers of tarmac (some racers even used aero bars and thin, cyclocross-style tires), we shot down the road in a daring peloton. Each racer depended on the others to hold their lines and maintain composure as we sped down the scenic beachside es-

planade, pulled a hairy u-turn, and raced back to a magnificent palace for the first transition.

Ever the competitor, Jon realized moments before the start that we would save precious time—only days later would we know how important every second truly was in this race—by cycling in our running shoes and then enjoying a seamless transition to running. The creativity paid off, and we hit the five-kilometer road running section at the front of the pack. As the field meandered through the palace, across a beach, and then back onto paved roads, teams jockeyed to make their presence known. Qasr Al Sarab shot to the front and led the way to the transition to an open-water swim.

Adventure races rarely require competitors to swim nearly a kilometer, but I was quickly learning that the Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge is not the typical adventure race. After hurriedly stripping to our shorts and donning goggles, we dove into a picturesque bay bordering Abu Dhabi City. Race flags signaling the swim's finish loomed one kilometer away, and for some





racers this swim would be a serious test. Assured by the swim training I had done in the weeks leading up to the race, I confidently fell into a rhythm in the water. When I saw the recognizable Ironman Triathlon swim caps of the German squad approaching on my left, I decided to simply slide into their slipstream and draft for the remainder of the swim. Apparently my training was not quite enough, and the Phelp-sian squad shot away from me in seconds!

Back on the beach, Team Salomon/Crested Butte regrouped quickly as we transitioned to the first of two three-kilometer paddling sections that would sandwich a quick orienteering section on a sandy island to complete the adventure triathlon. Running in the sand dunes here was a taste-tester for what would come on a much larger scale in two days time, and most teams navigated soundly with map and compass. The Kiwis established dominance in kayaks, with Team Qasr al Sarab taking the Adventure Triathlon Prologue in a decisive victory.

After a quick beach-side shower

and rehydration session, racing began again that afternoon with 33 kilometers of sea kayaking from Abu Dhabi City to a small, remote island to the north. At the le mans start from the beach, Jon and I were lucky to take the lead for the first 500 meters of paddling but were shortly overtaken by the Kiwis, who never looked back. Exiting the shelter of an island after a few kilometers, we hit the swells of the open seas. At one checkpoint, swells came together and broke on a sandbar. Most teams beached safely here, but some were not so lucky!

At day's end, sore muscles enjoyed a night's reprieve at a tiny island. The scene was spectacular, with stars in the sky and city lights in the distance...a truly memorable evening of camping with friends.

Day 2: Teams Spread Out on the Open Seas

Sea Kayaking, 55km

Pushing off at sunrise from our remote island haven, teams paddled towards four checkpoints that would take us back to Abu Dhabi

City over the course of about six hours. The satellite images we used to navigate throughout the race (standard topo maps are not available for the region) depicted sandy islands laced with thick bushes and surrounded by channels ranging from very deep to quite shallow. Finding the deep water proved crucial all day, and teams that were able to move fastest through the shallows by finding slightly deeper sections excelled.

Hydration and nutrition were also paramount on the water. During this section, I drank six liters of water carried in bladders strapped to the boat deck. I also ate constantly, consuming energy bars, gels, nuts, and raisins. As it turns out, salt water-saturated Powerbars don't taste very good, but they still do the trick!

The Kiwi teams extended their lead on this long paddling section. Those of us from Colorado and Canada, however, had our work cut out for us when we boarded the bus for the desert.

Days 3+4: The Heat is on in the Empty Quarter

Desert Trekking, 120km

Abu Dhabi's Rub al Khali, or "Empty Quarter," conjures images of ancient explorers, stranded travelers, and Bedouin caravans. The largest expanse of unbroken sand in the world, the area truly is one-of-a-kind. Sand dunes stretch beyond the horizon, interrupted only by flat, empty salt flats. Nothing grows. There is no water. Even in the winter, temperatures hover above 100°F (38°C). Animal life is limited to a few super-adapted species that thrive under these con-

ditions. Such was the stage for 120 kilometers of trekking on days three and four.

After busing a few hours south from the coastline, we camped in a barren flat surrounded by dunes. Dinner the night before on the island consisted of dehydrated meals and energy bars, so racers attacked the rich buffet of Middle Eastern food presented that evening with ravenous stomachs and smiling faces. Knowing that we would soon face discomfort for up to 36 hours, we took pleasure in an evening of international camaraderie under traditional tents in the desert.

Early the next morning, dressed once again in game faces, we ran into the dunes with sand flying into our eyes and questions dancing in our heads. Would our gaiters and Gore-Tex shoes keep the sand out? Would we get enough water? How hot would it be? Would we, the teams that lost time on the paddling sections, be able to regain precious minutes? What in the world had we gotten ourselves into, anyway?

Eager to capitalize on our running backgrounds and take advantage of fitness gained by training at altitude, Team Salomon/Crested Butte moved quickly to the front of the pack. Following our position closely on the map—I use the term loosely because the “map” was merely a satellite image of the area—I began to gain confidence in navigating the unfamiliar terrain. Things were looking good as we led the way to the first checkpoint.

A few minutes later, however, Jon came to a terrifying realization: “Man, my shoes are too small!” If you think walking around the shoe

store in kicks a size too small is uncomfortable, imagine running for almost 20 hours in such shoes. His shoes made ever smaller by sand working its way into every minuscule gap between threads, Jon hung on like a man possessed as his toes smashed and mashed.

Seven hours in, when the top teams took a few hours of our eight required hours of rest at a salt flat checkpoint, we had lost about 20 minutes to the leaders. In hope of alleviating some of the excruciating pressure building under Jon’s big toenail, he and I drilled through it from the top using a knife and safety pin. Moments later, we ran back into the dunes, knowing that that we would not stop again for at least six hours.

As night arrived, teams continued zig-zagging through sand dunes, following compass bearings to nowhere under a vibrant, star-lit sky. When we stopped for our final rest during the middle of the night, we remained almost half an hour behind the lead group, which included the Kiwis and other top teams.

Sunrise brought fire in the sky and timeless panorama: Were we really adventure racers, or stranded travelers from days long ago? On the horizon ahead, what I first thought was another team materialized into a mother camel with its newborn. Slimy and grey with umbilical cord still attached, the baby wobbled on unsure legs while its mother observed us suspiciously. “Oh yeah, this is why I do these races,” I thought silently to myself, too tired for conversation.

Moments later, Jon pushing the pace despite the fact that his toes had become minced-meat, we caught the lead group of six teams. The race was on!

Summitting the final dune, 120 kilometers and 19 hours of running under our belts, we spotted the finish line. To get there, we would have to drop about 50 meters down a near-vertical sand dune and run 200 meters across a salt flat. As seven teams took off in an all-out sprint, I felt like I was finishing a high school track race!

As we flew down in a cloud of sand,



the dune came alive, bellowing a sound reminiscent of a twin-propeller airplane, its granules rolling over each other in what grew into a miniature avalanche. Inspired to regain some respect after a subpar showing on the water early in the race, Team Salomon/Crested Butte turned on the after burners and crossed the line first. We had not gained any time on the leaders, but we had, like every effective adventure racing team out there, faced adversity and persevered.

Day 5: Salt in the Eyes, Sand in the Lungs; Time to Hammer!

Mountain Biking, 96km

Refreshed by another night of camping in the desert, racing began anew on Day 5 with two mountain biking sections. After a rip-roaring start that saw Team Qasr Al Sarab take the lead and never look back, most of the top teams traveled in a quick peloton over bumpy but fast dirt roads to the rest point of the day.

Qasr Al Sarab may be a five-star hotel, but it looks like a Medieval compound. Located in the middle of nowhere (truly, one sees nothing but sand dunes in every direction), the hotel is an island of luxury. During our one-hour stay, we snacked on hors d'oeuvres fit for a king, washed in a bathroom larger than my house, and napped in posh sofas.

Getting back on our bikes seemed ridiculous, but we did so anyway. Shortly after the re-start, racing really began as we turned on to a secondary dirt road. Here, the forceful wind we had battled all day had intermittently blown sand across the road. Some of these sandy patches necessitated shifting into a very



high gear, spinning like crazy, and hoping for the best. Others, deeper and longer, forced riders to dismount, run their bikes through the sand, and remount—all with speed and without stopping. Those with cyclocross experience excelled, and the pack soon dismantled.

The cycling experts of Team D.O.M.A. coped well with sand and salt in their eyes, lungs, and

bikes, and took the stage win. Teams Qasr Al Sarab, Salomon/Crested Butte, and ADCO followed closely. After hanging on through unfamiliar racing for four solid days, the uber-triathletes of Team Abu Dhabi Triathlon hung up their jerseys after a cycling crash by one team member.

Day 6: Navigation, Ropes, and a Sprint to the Finish!



Orienteering, Via Cordata, Mountain Biking, Running, 50km

Adventure racing teams generally rely on one person to navigate from checkpoint to checkpoint using map, compass, and, for the Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge in particular, GPS. For those of us who live and die by the compass, the map becomes our best friend throughout the race. We constantly consult the paper regarding decisions big and small; we relish opportunities to test our navigation skills against competitors. Day 6 set the stage for a navigator's greatest dream: pinpoint route finding in terrain bereft of any discernable features, in the dark, with the race on the line.

For me, a dream come true morphed into my worst nightmare right before my eyes...

With the top four teams fairly solidified in their positioning, Team Salomon/Crested Butte entered the final day of racing in fifth place, just one minute ahead of Team Abu Dhabi Sports Council/Wilsa, the talented and ever-persistent French

squad.

Sprinting away from the starting line towards a series of orienteering checkpoints with visions of putting more time on our closest competitors, I seemed to be running across a lifeless, lightless moonscape. The rolling ground was covered with sharp, misshapen rocks; ankles would pay a high price today.

The darkness of early morning necessitated navigation purely by compass bearing. As we ran hard to the second checkpoint, trying to hold onto the straight line dictated by the compass, Jon noticed our team was suddenly alone. "Hey, I wonder if we over-ran the checkpoint, Trav," he chimed in. My initial reaction was to hold my course. I had the map and compass, after all.

A few minutes later, an approaching caravan of headlamps confirmed Jon's intuition and my nightmare: we had, indeed, run past the checkpoint, at full gallop. We turned and headed back, guided by the approaching lights of the entire racing field coming in the opposite direc-

tion. After hoping to put time on our rivals, we arrived at the checkpoint in last place.

Adventure racing always calls on its participants to be resilient, and I was thankful to have three teammates that morning who maintained faith in my navigational skills as they followed me to the remaining orienteering checkpoints. Denise, Sully, Jon, and I ran as if we were in a 10-kilometer road race, passing more than half of the field before hitting a backup at the ropes section.

Djebel Hafeet is a luminous rocky crag that towers nearly 1000 meters above the flat plain below, where we had been orienteering. To summit this monster, we would scale a steep, rocky canyon rigged with ropes in the via cordata fashion. Wearing a climbing harness equipped with two extending points of contact, we clipped and unclipped from fixed ropes hundreds of times as we climbed hard in an attempt to gain back lost time.

Jon seemed to have forgotten that his feet were utterly ruined, and he led the way to the summit, where we completed the section at a parking lot and snack shop. In stark contrast to the excruciating heat during most of the race, the Djebel Hafeet brought thick clouds and cold wind.

Refueled by chips and soda, the entire field set off together in a flying peloton as we descended the paved road to Al Ain, a beautiful city near Abu Dhabi's eastern border with Oman. The field completed the cycling section together and enjoyed a few minutes of camaraderie before the final section of the Abu

Dhabi Adventure Challenge. During the final three-kilometer running section, racers from 20 countries reflected on their time in Abu Dhabi. An exciting adventure triathlon in Abu Dhabi City led to two days of sea kayaking in beautiful coastal waters. The Rub al Khali brought an incredible environment, unsurpassed in uniqueness and drama by any in the world. Two days of trekking there was truly incredible. Mountain biking in a sandstorm was not to be forgotten—nor was the Qasr Al Sarab Hotel. Orienteering and fixed ropes were icing on the cake!

I will remember the Abu Dhabi Adventure Challenge as one of the best races in the world, and I hope to return to the region soon.

Macy's journalism has been widely published in print and online sources including Adventure Sports Magazine, The Boulder Daily Camera, Trail Runner, Adventure World Magazine, Sleepmonsters.com, ARWC 2007 Coffee Table Book, and The University of Colorado Honors Journal. He teaches reading, writing, and arithmetic at Denver Academy High School (www.denveracademy.org).

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Injuries

by Cynthia Engel



Unfortunately, even the best of us are unable to escape their wrath forever.

It seems this has been a season of injuries for me and my closest training and racing partners. Strange how it all happens at the same time; and disappointing when the injuries don't complement each other. My ski training partner, for example, broke her hand in a fall off her bike. I injured my foot. So she can only do hikes and runs and I can't do either of those, so we don't get to train together at all. Instead we've been discussing favorite books. My adventure racing partner has had a persistent cough all that makes it difficult for him to breathe hard. So as a result, we spend time eating, waxing philosophical and playing games.

Acute or chronic, how we deal with our injuries is as important as

how we approach our training and nutrition. It's all ultimately about listening to and respecting our bodies. When we get injured, this is the critical time in our relationships with our physical selves to give them the break they are screaming for in the best ways they can – by breaking down. Learning to take things down a notch and really giving my body the time and space it needs to put its energy into fixing itself, and watching a lot of my friends go through the same process, has been an enlightening lesson in acceptance.

When I first felt the pain in my foot, I ran through it figuring it would work itself out and go away. "I can handle the pain," I thought, "it's not a big deal." So I continued to run on it as if I was providing myself with some sort of veiled proof about how hard core and dedicated I was to my training. But as I've

learned this summer, the body always wins that battle. The more I ran on it, the more it hurt until I got to the point where I couldn't really walk anymore. At which point, I finally decided it would be a good idea to get it checked out. In fact, of course, it would have been a really good idea to have done that several weeks prior to that decision when I first noticed a twinge of pain. We know our bodies really well. As a result, you would think that anything out of the ordinary would be an alarm to us rather than a challenge to ignore. But denial is powerful. It turns out I had a chronic overuse injury and the recovery time would be anything between 6 weeks and 6 months depending on how my foot responded to the treatments I chose to undertake and my willingness to give my foot the rest it needed to heal. That was not what I wanted to hear.

Photo courtesy of Tim Holmstrom

Getting injured is a difficult reality to face. On the surface, it's easy to say we are simply injured and it is what it is. To move beyond being injured to being healed again, however, usually means a significant change in lifestyle and in attitude. Making those changes for the long haul requires being wholly honest with ourselves and, at some point in the process, finding the courage to come face to face with our identity. We may no longer be able to go on the long runs, the bike rides or the paddles that form a part of who we are both to ourselves and to those who know us. We may not be able to race for a season. Or we may not be able to get out and explore the places we had hoped to explore because we are temporarily unable to access them. Accepting that can be difficult. So difficult, in fact, that most of us choose not to accept it.

Instead, we give our bodies a rest for a couple weeks. Then we hit the wall where we have not been getting out and doing all the activities that give us the structure and balance we crave, and we start to feel awkward in our lives. So we choose to push our injuries just a bit to see if they feel ok. Then we go back to the cycle of telling ourselves it doesn't hurt that much in our subconscious efforts to get back to the comfort of what we do. And then the pain comes back again. In the process, rather than healing ourselves, we extend our injuries and prolong the challenges that are waiting for us, both physically and mentally.

This cycle will continue endlessly until we are willing to fundamentally accept the injuries themselves and find the courage to also begin to let go and explore who we are instead of what we do. We can find

other ways to get out and train that may feel a bit awkward compared to our usual activities. We will also find some new, non-multisport ways to pass the time. In the process, we will probably make some new discoveries about our identities and what inspires us.

While most of us are inherently attracted to pushing our comfort zones, we do so in predictably unpredictable environments. If we choose to give up that reality in the name of healing ourselves, we expand our comfort zones into directions that we are completely unable to control. This is the growth that makes us stronger; where all expectations about the path from one point to another are released and we simply take things one day at a time. We keep our intentions for healthy bodies at the forefront, but the path from here to there is wide open and we are genuinely open to that reality; that every day will bring a new adventure both physically and mentally. Our appreciation for who we are deepens as we let go of identifying with what we do and we eventually find ourselves with a renewed ability to find balance and structure in our lives even with our injuries and without the activities we thought formed the foundation of our identities.

And hopefully, just when we start feeling like Yoda about our injuries, they heal and we can go back to those activities we've missed! In the process, however, we've gained a deeper appreciation both for who we are and for what we do. I know now, for example, that I can go a full summer without trail running or backpacking in the mountains and still be a healthy, balanced and vibrant person. My relation-

ships with my training and racing partners are deeper than matching heart rates and bikes attached by tow bars. I've discovered several areas of our region that are accessible by bike that I never knew existed. And finally, the additional rest and centeredness has impacted my athletic performance in a positive way as well. The ability to let go and take things in the moment is a skill that can always use refining. Personally, working on that skill has had a constructive impact on both my own identity and on my athletic outcomes.

Suddenly, injuries no longer seem like a wrath. Maybe they are instead simply an opportunity for growth and change; a lesson in acceptance not only of what we are unable to do temporarily, but more importantly, of who we are for the long term.

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Indoor Winter Training: To Ride Or Not!

No witnesses? Hmm, that couch looks interesting....

It's early in the morning. It's freezing outside. It's dark out. You remember that you've invested heavily in lots of equipment for days like today. Why? Because you're known to use the weather as an excuse for choosing not to get that ride in. Or run those miles. So one day you got smart. You decided to purchase thousands in equipment to make sure you couldn't use the weather as an excuse any longer. I call it blame storming.

But that guilt only gets you out of bed.....

You begin the long slow flight of stairs down to the unfinished basement to begin your workout. You don't want to be there. There's no one to talk to. There's no one to push you. There's no one to race. There are so many other things you

could be doing....none of them involve exercise.

Now I'm looking at my bike trainer and taking a deep breath of disappointment. I don't want to do it. I look around the dimly lit room. There's an old couch in the basement in front of an old television. I know that there's nothing on TV at 6 a.m. but maybe today's different. Sesame Street just turned 40. I wonder if there's a special on. I shouldn't miss that. After all, I remember the days when it was okay for an androgynous large yellow bird to have an imaginary red elephant friend that only they could see. I owe to all those people who dedicated their lives to PBS. They taught me good values. Hmm, did they teach me to blame storm? I ponder for a moment. Whatever. On goes the television.....30 minutes of channel surfing and unable to find the Sesame Street special. I'm perplexed. I quickly

realize that I've compromised my exercise time and will need to re-schedule due to other commitments like work and family. I politely remind myself that I'll be back on the trainer tomorrow and justify my now happy march back up the stairs to begin my day.

We've all been there. We've all had those days. How many of those days is a direct correlation of where you land in the pecking order during the spring group rides.

In the fight against procrastination; I've taken another step towards keeping me on the trainer. This time I've been able to do it without spending any money. I set up the internet in front of my bike trainer. Furthermore, I'm limiting myself to select areas to browse. Now my routine consists of a new regimen.

Warm up includes checking my email. Then I move on to a brief



scan of some of the tweets I've missed overnight. From twitter, I catch up on the status of my friends on Facebook. Finally, I connect to my favorite local news source to read the headlines and feel informed. For me, that takes about 15 minutes. Then the secret is to get off Facebook and the news.

Here's where it gets interesting. I've created an account with www.RACEDAYRUSH.com. This site is a collection of multisport videos featuring real mountain bike races and road bike rides...all filmed from the saddle. Depending on my workout, I can choose from a library of videos to help me stay focused.

From sub 60 minute mountain bike races where intervals dominate, through to 2 hour road rides for that much needed base building activity; there's something there for all of your workouts. All I know is that it makes the time go by and I push myself harder than I normally would.

Remember, there are no witnesses.....so it's easy to let yourself coast. Watching these videos puts you on the road or back on the trail. You feel like you're in the middle of this race. I don't know what area of the brain it taps; but somehow the competitive spirit in you is unleashed in that cold dark basement and you've completed what you set out to do.....work out.



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The Epic Race

by José Lopes • Photos by Paulo Calisto

Adventure Racing World Championship (ARWC) - Estoril Portugal XPD Race 2009

Experience, endurance, navigation and strategy were the most important qualities for success in the 7th edition of the ARWC held in “Lusitania” – The Land of Light. Traversing one of the most demanding territories in Europe, the racers finish the World Champs in the Wild West Coast of Portugal, at the holy grail of Surfing; the Baleal Beach at Peniche. Surprising everyone with a strong finish and a sharp strategy Team “Helly Hansen – Prunesco” from Great Britain were crowned as the 7th Adventure Racing World Champions !!!!

After 128 hours of non-stop racing and over 900Kms run on foot, mountain-bike, roller-blades and kayak, the 2009 Adventure Racing World Championship - “Estoril Portugal XPD Race” turned out to be the supreme challenge to endurance and strategy. Out of the 59 teams coming from 25 different

countries that left Estoril on Sunday 8th November, only 40 were able to classify, representing a rather low withdrawal rate, considering the length and the harshness of the track.

Requiring an extreme endurance capacity, this four-member team challenge (of which at least one must be a woman) set out searching for the most astonishing landscapes in Portugal. Starting at the Estoril Coast and taking the caravan out to explore the tracks of the Lousã, Açor, Estrela, São Mamede and Aire e Candeeiros mountain ranges. Along the way, the racers have crossed the Schist Villages, the river Zêzere, the Natural Parks of International Tejo River and the Castelo de Bode dam. After swimming across the Óbidos lagoon, the finish line was set on the beach at Baleal, where the last survivors arrived on foot and mountain bike during the morning of the 7th day.

Averaging 37 years old, the British Team “Helly Hansen-Prunesco”

surprised everybody with a sharp strategy and a vigorous final sprint and conquered their first world title in adventure racing. Team leader Tom Gibbs – an Airbus designer – revealed the team’s strategy; “We came to Portugal with no major expectations and therefore put little pressure on the team. Our strategy turned out fine and it was all decided on the final hours of the race,” North-Americans “Nike/Beaver Creek” finished 2nd and Swedish “Lundhags Adventure” in 3rd with a small difference. These two teams both with Kiwi reinforcements, led the race at different stages, with the Swedes dominating the first day at the Estoril Coast and Nike taking control after the second day at the Schist Village of Fajão to lose it at the Templar Lands on a Friday 13th... weird !!!

The kiwis of “ORION HEALTH.COM”, former World Champions resisted most of the race to the strong pressure put on them by the challengers but were not able to recover from a dramatic episode

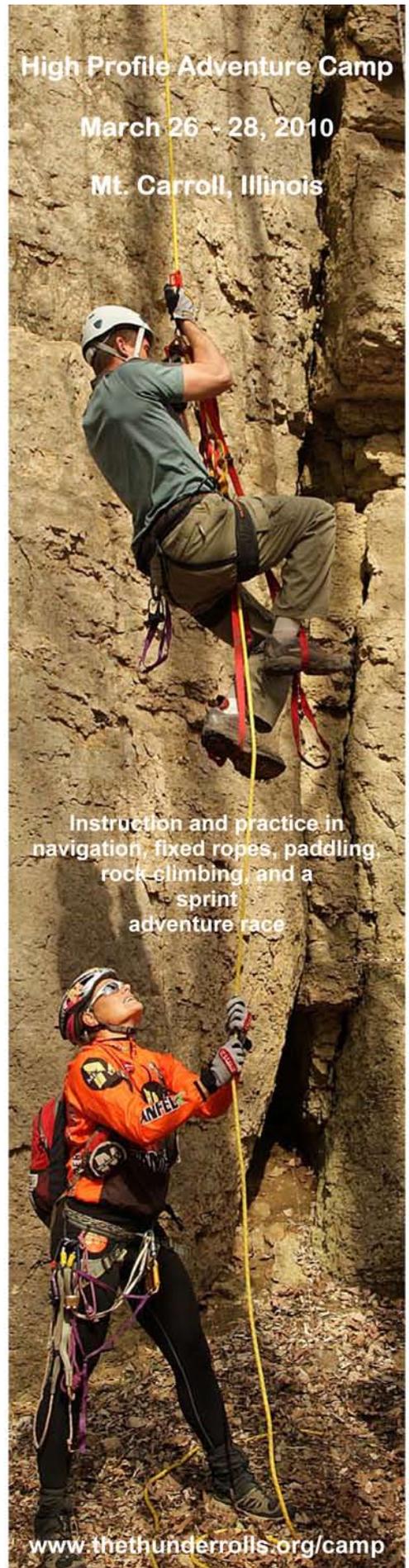


earlier in the final stage and got to fourth place in front of the best Eastern Europe team, the poles from “Navigator RaidLight” who made the most balanced race out of the TOP five. Out of the six home teams that started, only three were able to finish. Far behind the leaders, these teams only goal was reach the finish line. José Marques, leader of the current Portuguese National Champs team “Extreme Challenge/ IGEOE” (23rd place) was content with the result; “The team worked well even in the most difficult moments. We could have done better as we were close to Top 10 for a while, but fatigue caused a navigation error that cost us 3 long unrecoverable hours. Even so, we are happy with the result and shall do our best to be in Spain for the next world cup”.

If fact, that was the general feeling among the racers; the joy of the accomplishment and they will to come back for the next challenges. The enthusiasm was contagious and Alexandre Guedes da Silva, president of the “Associação Portuguesa de Corridas de Aventura (APCA)”, said ;“We couldn’t be any happier

as we were able to set an international landmark. The quality of our organization was recognized and competition-wise nothing like this had ever been seen before! It’s awesome and the “return” is already scheduled for next Spring at Pampilhosa da Serra, for the ARWS Portugal XPD Race 2010”.

The 7th ARWC Estoril Portugal XPD was organized by APCA under license of Southern Traverse, PLC and supervision of the Portuguese Orienteering Federation. The event prime sponsors were Turismo Estoril, EPM and the ADXTUR – Agência para o Desenvolvimento Turístico das Aldeias do Xisto and had the support of the municipalities of CASCAIS, LOUSÃ, PAMPILHOSA DA SERRA, ARGANIL, MANTEIGAS, BARCO, FUNDÃO, VILA VELHA DE RODÃO, NISA, CASTELO DE VIDE, MARVÃO, MAÇÃO, VILA DE REI, ABRANTES, TOMAR and PENICHE. Thank you to the more than 60 volunteers from 10 different countries – Portugal, Australia, Denmark, France, Brazil, Norway, Sweden, Slovenia, Great Britain and the United States.



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AWM Navigation Challenge Round 10



Adventure World Magazine Navigation Challenge: Round 10

Try your navigation skills from the comfort of our own home with this online navigation contest. Answer all the CP questions in order by following the instructions below. E-Mail your answers to info@adventureworldmagazine.com True North and Grid North are assumed to be identical on this 1:24K map.

This month your team is on the Tiburon Peninsula for the Tenth round of the Adventure World Magazine Navigation Challenge, brought to you by www.ARNavigSupplies.com For more navigation challenges see the new Tabletop Adventure Race & Navigation Challenge Book from AR Navigation Supplies.

Checkpoint	Instruction	Question
Start	Find the Pier at Paradise Beach Country Park.	What is the UTM of the Northern most point of the Pier?
CP 1	From the Northern most point of the Pier Plot a bearing of 353.5 deg for 1.5 miles. From that point plot a bearing of 291 deg for 1 mile. From that point plot a bearing of 281 deg for 1.25 miles.	Where do you end up?
CP 2	Hike to UTM 0544420 4195900	How much elevation did you gain from CP 1 to this location?
CP 3	Follow the trail to the peak marked 602 in grid square 0545 4195	How many contour lines did you cross on this trek?
CP 4	Find the nearest spring to CP 3.	What is the distance in miles by trail to this spring?
CP 5	From the spring follow the nearest creek downstream and find the highest point in grid square 0544 4194	Triangulate your position by giving the bearings to CP 2 and CP 3?
CP 6	Find the Southern most Spring on the map.	What is the elevation of this spring?
CP 7	From the Spring make your way to BM 4 on the Eastern side of Belvedere Lagoon.	Give the UTM of this location.
CP 8	From CP 7 paddle your boats and find the shortest portage into Richardson Bay.	What is the distance of this paddle in miles?
CP 9	Find the Wreck in Richardson Bay.	What bearing and distance in miles would you need to take from the portage to arrive at the Wreck?
CP 10	Find the only marked Rock in Richardson Bay.	Give the distance in miles and the bearing from the Wreck to the Rock.
Finish	Email your answers to: info@adventureworldmagazine.com	



WWW.ARNNavSupplies.COM

The Basic Roamer© AR

As the Official Navigation Tool of the USARA, the design of the Basic Roamer© AR has been carefully considered for US Adventure Racing and has over 20 major features. Originally developed for rallying in Europe this tool is now customized and available for the US Adventure Racer. Rally navigators must make split second navigation decisions at very high speed and any errors can be very costly to crew, car and team. With these challenges in mind it is easy to see how the Adventure racing navigator can benefit from the Basic Roamer© AR. www.BasicRoamerAR.com.



Adventure Racing Rotating Map Holder

A lightweight, rotating design with a quick release mounting bracket the rotating map holder is designed to fit almost any bike, it is built strong enough to withstand the rigors of any adventure race or bicycle orienteering event. The solid construction will not flex or flap on rough roads and will hold most flexible map covers or just the map itself <http://www.arnavsupplies.com/products.html> Positioned for easy reading it will make bike navigation much easier. Proven in many races and successfully used in 2006 USARA National Championships.

The Adventure Racing Waterproof Pedometer

Now you don't have to guess or time your travel to the next CP, you can know exactly how far you've gone. Most pedometers fail completely when they get near water. We've developed one that actually works when wet. It even survived the full course at Primal Quest.

Check out the full line of navigation products from AR Navigation Supplies including: Waterproof Map Cases, Racing Compasses, Waterproof Pens, MYTopo Maps, Nav Practice Guides & More!



www.ARNNavSupplies.com

gear closet - trail socks



Injinji - Mini Crew

Giving your toes their own little compartment hasn't been popular since the 80s. Injinji has recently been bringing this trend back however. But these little crew socks are not all about fashion. Three ply construction in the arch support provides support and promotes circulation and the band around the ankle is double layered to keep the sock in place. MSRP: \$12-14

www.injinji.com

WrightSock - Cool Mesh

This sock is more like two socks in one. It is double layered with an inner sock that acts much the same way a liner sock does. The company actually guarantees you'll be blister free. When tested on an all day peak bagging mission in Colorado's Sawatch range we couldn't collect on that guarantee. They did their job and kept the blisters at bay. MSRP: \$9.50-10

www.wrightsock.com



Wigwam - Ironman Surge Pro

Another longtime sock maker that is not stuck in the past, Wigwam is pushing the limits with their socks so you can push the limits on the trail. The Ironman sticks to the foot well and breathes as if it weren't there at all. The socks are light and stay on the foot well. The best use for these socks would be any multisport activity during the warmer months of the year. MSRP: \$11

www.wigwam.com



gear closet - trail socks



Bridgedale - X-Hale Speed Demon

This sock maker has been keeping feet warm and dry since 1910. And even though they are an old company, they use the latest in sock technology. The Speed Demon is no exception. Categorized in Bridgedale's "Fast and Light" category, they are highly breathable and wick moisture well. Recommended for warmer weather trail jaunts. MSRP: \$15.95

www.bridgedale.com

Lorpen - MultiSport Light

These tri-layer crew socks are all about wicking. Mostly a mix of Tencel and Coolmax the MultiSport Light does a nice job of keeping you dry a little longer than some competitors. And with a money back guarantee there's no reason not to try them. MSRP: \$14.99

www.lorpen.com



Fox River - Running Light Weight

"Lightweight" is often an oxymoron when it comes to finding a sock with padding. But the Running Light Weight achieve this by providing just enough cushion for the bottom of the foot. An exemplary arch support and wicking technology round out the needs of the runner with these socks. MSRP: \$8.99

www.foxsox.com





"I've done cool events all over the world, from Croatia to Thailand but it's stuff like this that fulfills and stays with you. I mean running through thick remote jungle and desolate beaches with members of an indigenous tribe? Truly a venue your soul will never forget! "

- Mark Matyazic

"An amazing adventure 3 day run across the Panamanian islands, through jungles, across mountains, rivers, mud and all forms of nature...a life changing experience."

- Jaime Fink

"This race is perfect... It allowed the fastest competitor a great challenge with the terrain and for the slowest competitor a race they could get their fill of a challenge but still finish... It was a challenge for me. I loved every minute of it. For me this was a PR, a double PR. I have done a marathon and such but never have I run two days in a row, never three days in a row with mileage such as this and definitely not in this terrain. ."

- Angela Brown

"The trip was absolutely amazing. I had the best birthday vacation ever! Definitely looking forward to next year.. got to meet some great new friends and build strong bonds!! Thank you for setting the whole trip up! Im sooo happy I got to go!!

- Jenny Paal

Panama Island Run



Balloon Squat Relay Race

What You Need:

1 water balloon per player (and a few extras)

How To Play

Make start and finish lines about 20 feet apart. Place the water balloons in two piles at the starting line. Call out “go” and the first person on each team picks up their balloon and runs to the finish line. At the finish line they must sit on their balloon and pop it and then run back to the start line. Then the next player grabs their balloon and does the same thing. If a player drops his balloon, or pops it on the way, he must go back to the start line and take a new balloon and start again. The first team to finish popping all their balloons is the winning team.

Go Outside

The Go Outside mission is to promote an appreciation of the outdoors and healthy lifestyles in children through positive outdoor experiences, physical activity and education.





ON THE HORIZON

Coming up in future issues:

Feature Articles:

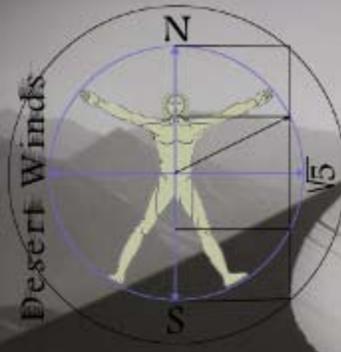
- Return of Fat Adventurer
 - Night Training
 - Training and Pets
 - Adventure Travel
- Green Gear and Companies
 - Cross Training Options

Gear Reviews:

- Adventure Travel Gear
- Spring Trail Shoe Review
 - And More!

If you have anything that you would like to read about or just have suggestions or comments...email us at info@adventureworldmagazine.com

September 2010



It is all about the race course. The Desert Winds - an unforgettable experience.

Desert Winds Expedition Race

DesertWindsExpeditionRace.com
robert@kayaklakemead.com



adidas Terrex Adventure Race
Lakes 2010

IMPOSSIBLE IS NOTHING

What | 4 days of non-stop Adventure
Where | Lake District, England
When | 27th - 30th August 2010
Who | Teams of 4
▶ www.adidas-ar.com

A Day To Remember

by *Justin Lichter*

The day started out just like any other day. I woke up at 4:30 in the morning, ate breakfast, packed up my tent and my backpack, and started walking. The morning light was still a few hours away but with the cool air and lack of water, I had to take advantage of this time of day. Finally the sun came up over the tall grass and the flat savannah, so I hiked a bit farther by map and compass and then decided to take a little snack break.

I was about 1500 miles into my solo hike southbound across Africa. I had already hiked across Ethiopia and was almost to the Kenya/Tanzania border. The scenery and terrain had changed numerous times and I was now entering new surroundings yet again. It was sort of like being in the San Diego Wild Animal Park, but without the “Park”, the animals were actually wild, and I was definitely a visitor. In the past two days I had been seeing water buffalo, giraffes, gazelles, okapi (a big grazer with spirally horns), serval (a cheetah-like animal but a little smaller), and some other animals that I don’t even know their names. I wasn’t really scared of these too much though. After gawking at me, the locals had told me in very broken English and hand gestures that the animals I really needed to watch out for were elephants (their number one fear), lions, and solo buffalo. The locals never go out anywhere alone with-

out a spear or machete type knife, and never leave their homes at night. I was completely unarmed, alone, and walked in the dark. The locals thought I was crazy.

After about 30 minutes of sitting in the waist tall, golden grass I got moving again. A few minutes later I walked up on a family of elephants that had moved a bit close to me while I was taking a break. I started to alter my way to walk around them and give them a safe distance. Apparently they thought I was a little too close though. One of the elephants charged at me. I could feel the ground shake with each step. I started to run in zigzags like the locals had said because the elephants can’t make quick turns since they are so big. The elephant was still gaining on me when I made my second quick cut at one of the zigs. I didn’t notice it but there was a lion sleeping in the tall grass right there. I spooked the lion and he sprinted off to the left. I cut back right and looked back over my shoulder to see the elephant had decided to charge after the lion instead of me. I ran away a little farther then stood there, adrenaline rushing through my body and breathing heavily and watched the elephant defending its family and chasing off the lion. I then made a wider girth around the elephants and the lion figuring that I was very lucky to have survived and been able to witness this first

hand and hopefully the rest of the hike would go smoothly.

I continued walking the rest of the day seeing buffalo, gazelle, a leopard, hippos, but no more major excitement. I kept thinking about the elephants and the lions and how lucky was to witness that and to still be alive. I was hoping that after these two incidents in the past five days that the real excitement was over. I don’t know how many times I replayed that in my head in the remaining hours of the day, but the hours passed uneventfully as I kept walking and the sun was setting so I set up my tent in the tall grass and made dinner. I read for about an hour in my tent and then decided to look outside before I went to sleep. I shined my battery starved headlamp around (I have a habit of trying to wait until my batteries are completely dead until I change them). A large female lion was sitting in the grass about 30 feet directly in front of me. “Oh crap”, I said to myself. After a minute or two of yelling and shining my light trying to scare it away, it just kept staring at me unmoved. I then shined my flashlight around the grass around me. I stopped at something moving slowly behind me and about 35 feet away. Another female lion was stealthily creeping up behind me through the grass. They were hunting me. I grabbed my trekking poles which were laying next to me and started



screaming and banging my poles and trying to act intimidating. No response. The cat behind me was creeping closer. I continued yelling and banging and shaking my tent. Nothing...creeping closer from behind and sitting tight right in front of me. I grabbed my camera and tried to use the flash to scare them. Nothing. The lion was now coming up from behind and only a few feet to my left. It turned its head to the right and glared at me while it walked past me. Then about four feet in front of me it turned and walked directly past me. I tried to flash it again with the camera (which by chance gave me a crazy lion picture), but the lions were still completely un-phased. It continued to walk past me and walked away. The other lion watched it walk away and then decided to join her hunting partner.

I don't know what happened and why they decided to spare me, but I am not complaining. Amazing!

I didn't sleep at all that night and

decided to change my plans and get out of there after that. My intended route continued and headed into more game reserves where there would be even more animals. On my hike to the nearest road, I saw those same lions eating a buffalo that they had taken down sometime after they came by my tent to say "Hi". While I laid awake and restless the rest of the night I came up with a few ideas about the lions choice of meat. They are: 1) maybe they were curious what the heck that was in the middle of their savannah, 2) they decided I was too skinny and not even worth it because they would all be fighting over what little meat I have, 3) they realized that human meat probably isn't as good as buffalo, 4) they initially thought I was an injured elephant because the Fly Creek color could be similar to an elephant lying down, then realized that wasn't the case, 5) I don't know how good their eyesight is but maybe they thought I was bigger than I am because I was standing in the vestibule of the Fly Creek

and thought the tent was part of my body, 6) maybe since I didn't run, unlike every other animal that gets stalked by lions, I threw them for a little loop, 7) maybe I just got really lucky and it obviously wasn't my time to go.

Luckily, that was the end of the excitement, but that will always be a day that I'll remember.

Justin is currently living near Lake Tahoe, CA and he loves to hike, ski, surf, swim, climb, and do pretty much anything outdoors and active. You can find more info on some of the long-distance trips that he has done on his website at www.justinlichter.com.