



WENGER® PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE

8th Edition: February 8th - 18th 2010

“The wildest and toughest race on Earth”

CHAMPIONS READY BUT ENDURANCE BATTLE BEGINS EARLY FOR SOME

- 600km endurance challenge begins on Tierra del Fuego on Tuesday
- Battle begins early for teams in mid-air emergency en-route to Patagonia
- Reigning champions Helly Hansen-Prunesco confident but feeling the pressure

February 8th, 2010

Reigning champions Helly Hansen-Prunesco are fresh and ready to begin their bid to retain the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race title in Chile tomorrow (Tuesday) – but several rival teams are facing an uphill battle after a mid-air emergency and a backlog at Santiago airport caused havoc just getting teams to “the end of the world”.

The event, which will run through 600km of Chilean wilderness across Tierra del Fuego and down to the world’s southernmost town, Puerto Williams, begins with a tough kayak, trek and mountain bike on the opening day - but it has been a race against time for Scandinavian team Nord Water, German team Herbertz and Japanese team East Wind.

“It has been a challenging start to the race for some teams – and that was before they even got here,” said race director Stjepan Pavicic. “This race is always unpredictable but usually that is after it has started! Fortunately, we plan for incidents like this and despite the delays all the teams have arrived and we are all raring to go.

“This year’s race will begin on the shores of the Chilean mainland with a quick kayak across to the Tierra del Fuego where the teams will trek to a long mountain bike section. With 14 teams this year the start is going to be pretty spectacular as everyone will be eager to get going as quickly as possible to gain an early advantage.”

Nord Water and Herbertz were delayed when their flight to Santiago was forced to turn back mid-Atlantic and make an emergency landing in the Canary Islands and both had arrived by the early morning on Sunday along with the delayed Japanese team, who missed their connection and only just made it to the pre-race briefing.

In contrast it was a smooth arrival for reigning champions Helly Hansen-Prunesco, who admitted the pressure is on as they try to become the first team to win two years in a row. The British team will change their fast and light strategy from last year to ensure they can cope better with the challenging conditions expected in the Chilean Patagonia region.

Team captain Nicola MacLeod said: “There is a bit of pressure on us going back this year, but we enjoyed racing as a team last time and the team worked very well together. It was a real high to win the race as it was definitely the hardest we had ever done – so we wanted to come back as the same team.





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“We realised we didn’t take enough clothes last year so this year we are not going to go lightweight – we are going to accept a bit of extra weight so we can add an element of comfort to the race. The two things we were not so keen on last year were paddling against the winds and battling the impenetrable forest. Unfortunately, from what we have heard, we don’t think they are going to hold back on the forest and the paddling looks like it might be shorter, but I wouldn’t be surprised if that means it’s tougher!”

“This is always a really tough race, but that’s what is so good about it – the chance to pit your wits against other competitors and against the unpredictable climate in such a beautiful wilderness place. Whatever happens this year, though, we are going to enjoy the wilderness of Patagonia. It’s hard not to!”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

ABOUT WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE

The Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race is an annual adventure race which takes place in the southern-most region of the world. Top-ranked international teams compete in spectacularly rugged and climatically diverse terrain in the Chilean Patagonia region located between southern latitudes 49° and 56°. Extremely physically and mentally challenging, the event tests competitors to the limit on bike, kayak and foot as they traverse plains, mountains, glaciers, native forests, swampland, rivers, lakes and channels, guided only by their mind and spirit and driven on by their physical stamina and experience. Past routes have incorporated the Southern Continental Ice Field, the Torres del Paine National Park, the Strait of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego, the Darwin Range, and the Beagle Channel.

ABOUT WENGER

Wenger was founded in 1893, in the famous Swiss Jura region. It has developed around a passion for innovation, precision and expert craftsmanship and is best known as the maker of the genuine Swiss Army Knife. Today, the company produces approximately 250 styles of their famous pocketknives, as well as butcher's and professional catering knives known the world over. In 1997, Wenger Watch SA was founded in the hotbed for Swiss watches, Biel/Bienne, Switzerland. In just 12 short years Wenger Swiss watches have developed a reputation for reliability, multi-functionality and performance. Within the last eight years, Wenger established relationships with a small number of industry leaders who began manufacturing Wenger-branded products that embody the characteristics of the world famous Swiss Army Knife in the footwear, tent, backpack, sleeping bag, computer mobility and travel gear categories.

CONTACT AND UPDATES

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