



WENGER® PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE

9th Edition : February 8th - 16th 2011

THE LAST WILD RACE

RACERS RECOUNT EXPERIENCES IN PATAGONIA'S WILD ADVENTURE RACE

- Six teams from a field of 14 international teams expected to complete the tough 2011 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race, as the final teams close in on the finish.
- British team, adidasTERREX/Prunesco claims victory – for the third consecutive year – crossing the finish line on Tuesday 15 February at around 4pm.
- Racers recount their experiences and highlights of the 'last wild race' which took them 503 kilometres through Chile's Patagonian region on bike, kayak and foot.



(PUNTA ARENAS, CHILE – 16 February, 2011) The 2011 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race is drawing to a close with the winning team, racers and organisers gathering at Chile's Pali Aike National Park to cheer on the final two teams expected to finish the challenging course later today. Six teams from an international field of 14 began the race from the Torres del Paine National Park on February 9, covering 503km through Patagonia. Racers came from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Denmark, France, Japan, New Zealand, the Czech Republic, UK, and the US.

On Tuesday afternoon, British team adidasTERREX/Prunesco crossed the finish line first, achieving a record three consecutive wins in the race billed as the world's 'the last wild'. The team completed the challenging course in five days, 12 hours and 36 minutes.

US team GearJunkie.com took second place, despite being awarded a 10 hour penalty for failing to check in to PC10. Third and fourth places went to Vaucluse Adventure Evasions from France and Ad Natura – Karibu from Croatia. Japan's East Wind and Perdido en el Turbal (US, UK), who have spent the day riding the final 188 biking stage, are expected to complete the race in the early evening.

This year's event proved to be one of the toughest and most spectacular in its history as weather conditions turned from sparkling sunshine in Torres del Paine to heavy rain in the western fjords.





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In a dramatic end to the race, persistent rain forced a section of the course to be cancelled while swollen rivers saw three teams airlifted over an impassable part of the course.

With most teams back from the wilderness, racers shared their thoughts and experiences of tackling Patagonia in the adventure race which pushed all competitors to their limit.

Fi Spotswood, adidasTERREX/Prunesco (UK) First

"All I want to do was finish, so to come first is great. This place is so wild. To do so many days in the wilderness, with not seeing any people is incredible. We saw a shack and went over because we were so excited to see something! But there was nobody there! There is no evidence of humans anywhere, and in the UK there is just no space like this. It is incredible. The last thing to walk here was probably a dinosaur!"

Bruce Duncan, AdidasTERREX/Prunesco (UK) (First)

"It's stunning, the ride along the flat, there's nothing, but it's so amazing there is just nothing. It was a hard cycle. Nick went straight over the handlebars 100m from here and it was the only fall all day, right at the end! But it was a good ride. We averaged 30kmh."

Daniel Staudigel, Gearjunkie.com (USA) (Second)

"I'm a Star Wars nut and it really reminded me of the planet where Yoda lives. It was a pretty amazing place to be. The whole area seemed like another planet full of life, rich and green, but also a place where you test your inner deepest darkest stuff. We had a few dark moments, definitely. But we are pretty self reliant, and unless someone's life is in danger I don't think it's worth pulling out the satellite phone and risking peoples' lives in a helicopter or whatever to come and get you. There was never a moment when we were in a position where that was going to be the best option."

Chelsey Gribbon, GearJunkie.com (USA) (Second)

"I love mountains and I get charged up in the alpine areas. When we did a bit of swimming today, it was amazing. Getting in that water, I mean, how could you not be invigorated by that! We started swimming (one day) at 6am and we were in and out of the water all day. Every hour or so we found ourselves jumping in for a bit – so I guess we're pretty clean by now at least! At the start of it we crossed the river – and it sucks because when they cross they are up to the tops of their legs but I'm so short it goes above my waist – so I get much wetter than them. So when we swam, that was better!"

Thierry Cunibil, Valcluse Adventure Evasions (France) – (Third)

"I'm very happy to finish. It was very difficult. Some parts were very good, some had wind right in the face. I don't know the speed of the wind but it was high. We were in second place at one stage but we had to stop for a repair because we had a problem with the rudder pedal because





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one of our team members was slipping. It is all very close, and it was a very nice river to paddle, downriver, in front of the mountains and ice. I think the next stage will be difficult with the navigation. We will go through the night, possibly one sleep, but we will be trying to push.”

Elvir Sulic, Ad Natura – Karibu (CRO) (Fourth)

“Coming fourth is great! We expected long sections in the kayaking and the mountain biking, and that was great, but we did not imagine Patagonia could be like what we experienced in the trekking! It was totally wild!”

Darija Bostjancic, Ad Natura-Karibu (CRO) – (Fifth)

“We had to do quite a bit of climbing, because of the route we took. That was fun. All of the team are quite experienced, so that was ok. You have to be strong in the head, for the whole race in fact, and we just don’t know what is in front of us. We have been getting a little sleep. (One) night it was four hours, because we were not allowed to go down to the checkpoint in the night, but the first night we also had two hours and the second night four. Sometimes when we were trekking through the tough stuff, we joked whether (Race Director) Stjepan (Pavicic) had actually done the route or just seen it from the helicopter!”

Kaori Waki, East Wind (Japan) (5th)

“The last section, we got in at PC7 and we didn’t know what time the cut-off was, so we just had to keep rushing. We weren’t sure we were going to make it, but it made us push hard. We made a few navigation mistakes and we struggled in the forests. For me it has been a real mental challenge, it is my first long race. We have slept only one or two hours every night and I am just glad we have made the cut-off times and finished the whole race.”

Masato Tanaka, East Wind (Japan) (5th)

“We came back this year because we had such a hard time in last year’s race and want to be challenged and to test ourselves again. Last year our goal was to finish the race so this year, we want to aim higher. People know about Patagonia. Patagonia is very famous in Japan. When we say we are racing in Patagonia they say: ‘OMG, you are to race there!’ In last year’s race, we took a lot of time to rest, so this year we going to shorten this. We also took a lot of time in transits so we want to make these smoother and faster.”

Niels Torp, Roadrunner Adventures (DEN) (7th)

“This race was the hardest trekking I have done. I had problems with my knee and we started to feel the water all down the body. This trek was made difficult because of a bad decision we made. At PC2, after the kayak section, our bags were not there and we did not know how long we would have to wait to get them so we decided to go on. We didn’t have gators and only had light gloves – and it turned out the bags arrived just ten minutes after we left!”





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Peter Spagnoli, Dancing Pandas (Can, US, NZ) (8th)

"The toughest part was going all night through the forest. Lots of branches and thorns to the face. The beat bog is so unpredictable too. It may look sturdy, but you can end up waist deep."

Noel Duffy, Dancing Pandas (Can,USA,NZ) (8th)

"Wow that was intense! At one point on the bike we just had to dive for cover because the wind was blowing stones at us! It was between two bright blue lakes, a really spectacular point, but the track dropped down then back up and the gust of wind just came down. At first we thought it was just a dust devil, and we'd seen lots of them. But it was strong, so we got off the bike and then hid away and grabbed the handlebars and dove down the bank. It was an intense cycle, and it was stunning, with amazing guanacos everywhere, lots of spectacular mountains, lakes, snow, and gorgeous intense blue water lakes."

Soledad Cristiano, Todo Aventura – La Segunda (Chile/Arg) (Retired)

"The trekking section is long, but we have a good navigator so that will help. We know the race is very difficult but we don't know what to expect during in the race. For example, we don't know if the route will be icy, cold or rainy so we don't know what clothing to bring. It's (was) a mystery."

Carlos Fonseca, Selva Kallash (Brazil) (Retired)

"This is a race in which you can't make mistakes because every time is precious and any time you lose you cannot recover."

Andre Vogel, Four Continents (Aus, Czech, USA) (Retired)

"It's the best race I've ever seen, the toughest race I've ever seen. The last wild race. I'll be back. I'm not sure which team we'll have but hopefully we'll be back next year or hopefully the following year but we're starting to plan for it. We have to try and finish this!"

Ricardo Urtubia, Joshiken (Chile) (Retired)

"The landscape is great and it's the reason to run this race. I like it that so many people want to visit the Magallanes region. Our objective is to finish the race. The bike leg is the strongest. The kayak is complicated in this river and the wind is the most difficult thing to content with throughout the entire race."

Nicolas Pivcevic - DAP Antarctica (Chile) (Retired)

"It's annoying to be out so early but not because we are local but because we know we are able to walk or trek for 600km or whatever. You always try to do your best, but when you think that because a few things that could have changed you could still be there and not because you failed or are discussing with your team or anything like that, it is like nothing."





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Marcelo Catalan – Xingu (Brazil/Arg) (Retired)

“When the boat turned and I saw Puerto Natales, even though I love this town and I think it is one of the greatest places in the world, I felt a little sadness in my heart because I left the wild behind. We were having fun out there. Even being out of the race, I was enjoying myself because that’s what I crave and that’s what I come here for. I kept looking at the mountains and the maps dreaming about the fjords, for paddling, dreaming. The only thing I would be mad at Stjepan for is just cutting my dream short!”

