



WENGER® PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE

8th Edition: February 9th - 17th 2010

"The wildest and toughest race on Earth"

CHAMPIONS RETAIN TITLE AS HALF THE FIELD MAKES IT THROUGH FROZEN RACE

- Freezing race as blizzard mountain conditions hit competitors in Darwin Range
- Champions Helly Hansen-Prunesco become first to retain title, close podium battle
- Teams witness Patagonian beaver devastation first-hand

February 22nd, 2010



The Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race saw competitors to take on sub-zero temperatures in the southern mountains of Chilean Patagonia this month (February) and finished with a team of British adventurers retaining their title and six other teams making it all the way through the spectacular scenery for the closest podium battle in the race's history.

British team Helly Hansen-Prunesco, returning after victory in 2009 to join a bumper field of 14 teams, performed faultlessly over almost 600km of kayaking, mountain biking and trekking through the

remote and spectacular wilderness of Chile's Tierra del Fuego and Isla Navarino, taking the lead midway through and finishing in just over five days and six hours.

Notoriously strong winds in the virgin wilderness of Chilean Patagonia caused the cancellation of the initial kayak across the Straits of Magellan and blew competitors off their bikes in the early stages but it was the tough trekking in the Darwin Range that created the biggest challenge, with the winners having to cross a fast-flowing icy river to make it to victory.

"It was an amazing race in an incredible part of the world," said winning captain Nicola MacLeod. "In the early part, it was hard enough to walk with the bike let alone ride it. Then in the trek, when we had to swim, we got very rapidly swept downstream but fortunately we chose the right spot. The howling blizzard was really tough, but it was also magical.

"This year's race has been fantastic for the scenery and spectacular surroundings. The high passes on the Paso de los Lagos were amazing and at night we saw the most amazing constellation of stars we have ever seen, surrounded by a crown of mountains. It was a tough race, but it was beautiful up there. We showed persistence pays – which is the motto of this race in a lot of ways. There were some really high quality athletes in the field but there is no weak link in this team."

This annual battle through the wilderness, which normally has a completion rate of between 30 to 40 percent, proved to be a true expedition for many teams but despite tough conditions an impressive 50 percent of the field managed to complete a course that traveled in the footsteps of Ferdinand Magellan and Charles Darwin as Chile celebrates its bicentenary.

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Behind Helly Hansen-PrunESCO several teams battled for the podium, with Spain's Air Europa Bimont stretching out an advantage to finish second while German team Herbertz and Team Switzerland shared third after a time correction for a delay in crossing the Tyrolean in the middle of the course. Americans GearJunkie.com came in fifth, Canadian's Untamed New England were sixth and the first Asian team to take part in the competition, Japan's East Wind, completed the course to become the final finisher in seventh place.

The race is run with the aim of raising awareness of the fragile environment in Chilean Patagonia - and teams saw the devastation caused by the abundant beaver population at first hand. MacLeod said: "They have certainly altered the environment. It's not what is needed and it has changed the whole ecosystem massively. You can see that when you go through it - there was dam after dam after dam."

The race moved quickly through Tierra del Fuego during the early stages, with five different teams taking a turn in the lead, but the main 114km trek through the Darwin Range proved too tough for some as seven of the 14 starting teams dropped out through exhaustion or because they failed to reach the checkpoints in time.

British team Fast and Light was unable to begin the main trek due to illness and Chilean team BOE Ejercito de Chile also made it little further. Four others - Almas Patagonicas (CL), Eddie Bauer (USA), Terra Mundo Lontra (BRA) and Almost Famous (USA) quit as the mountains steepened after 30km while Nord Water retired after Tuomas Sovijarvi succumbed to the pain after trekking 90km with internal bleeding in his leg from a fall.

Those that continued on experienced freezing conditions in the high mountain passes and GearJunkie.com's Jasson Magness said: "I have done a lot of backcountry expeditions and this really reminded me of that. There are no trails, anything goes and we just had to make it, no matter what we came up against - but the Guanaco trails led us in the right direction."

RACE RESULTS

1. 1	Helly Hansen-PrunESCO	UK	126hrs 8mins
2. 16	Air Europa Bimont	ESP	142hrs 46mins
3=. 4	Switzerland	SWI	145hrs 6mins
3=. 9	Herbertz	DE	145hrs 6mins
5. 7	GearJunkie.com	USA	147hrs 31mins
6. 5	Untamed New England	CDN	148hrs 17mins
7. 2	East Wind	JPN	162hrs 20mins
8. 11	Nord Water	FIN/SWE	reached PC15
9. 12	Almost Famous	USA	reached PC10
10. 6	Terra Mundo Lontra	BRA	reached PC10
11. 3	Eddie Bauer	USA	reached PC10
12. 8	Almas Patagonicas	CL	reached PC10
13. 14	BOE Ejercito de Chile	CL	reached PC9
14. 15	Fast and Light	UK	reached PC8

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD FROM THE PRESS GALLERY ON THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE: www.patagonianexpeditionrace.com





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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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