



WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE®

2004-2010

The adventure at the end of the world

BRITISH TEAM TAKES RECORD WIN IN WORLD'S WILDEST RACE

- British team the first to ever retain trophy in 'world's toughest and wildest race'
- Almost 600km of racing in the wilderness of Chilean Patagonia in over six days
- Conditions in Darwin Range too much for five teams and maybe more

British team Helly Hansen-Prunesco became the first in history to retain the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race title on Monday morning when they crossed the finish line on the Beagle Channel after six-and-a-half days of exhausting non-stop racing through the spectacular wilderness of Chilean Patagonia.

The four Britons, who at one point had to swim a fast-flowing ice-fed river to stay on track, won the world's 'toughest and wildest race' after a 600km course of trekking, kayaking and biking over the wind-swept pampas of Tierra del Fuego, peat bogs in Karukinka Reserve, snow-capped mountains and tree-filled canyons in the Cordillera Darwin and rough waves in the Beagle Channel.

They beat a field of 14 international teams to retain the Wenger trophy in Chile's bicentennial year and team captain Nicola MacLeod said: "This is such a special race and it's amazing to win it again – even more so because we have come back here with exactly the same team and beaten a high quality field.

"The route of this year's race was tough but also spectacular and it took us through some absolutely stunning surroundings. We race hard, but we still stop sometimes to take it all in and it is obvious Patagonia is at the tip of a continent – big wind, big weather, big sea and big mountains. Everything is extreme but also beautiful."

The race, which had a 30 percent finish rate last year, is made particularly tough by the unpredictable climate in this virgin territory – but this year's conditions were not too severe and all the teams were able to complete a fast first half that ran the length of Chilean Tierra del Fuego and into the foothills of the Darwin range.

Helly Hansen-Prunesco was virtually tied with Canadian team Untamed New England and Spaniards Air Europa Bimont when the first main trek of the race finished in central Tierra del Fuego but they excelled in strong winds on the 178km mountain bike section and built an unassailable lead on the 114km Darwin trek.

They completed the race by kayaking across the Beagle Channel and trekking up Mount King Scott and they reached the finish with almost half a day of race time advantage over closest rivals Air Europa Bimont, of Spain.

The race was too tough for some teams to complete the course, with British team Fast and Light the first to drop out at the halfway point after one of their members suffered a stomach bug and could not continue. The two local teams from Chile were next out, both missing the cut-off times on the route, while Brazilians Tierra Mundo Lontra and American team Eddie Bauer were too exhausted to finish.

Race director Stjepan Pavicic said: "This was a tough course and even to get halfway through is an achievement – the Darwin Range is magnificent but it is also a difficult place to trek, with some thick forests and some high mountain passes to get through.

"I am really impressed with Helly Hansen-Prunesco, who have done incredibly well to come back and win again, especially given the strong field the race has attracted this year. We had a great close competition but they pushed when it counted and at all times they followed exactly the spirit of the race."

The Olympics-partnered event, which is run to raise awareness for Chilean Patagonia and the fragile environment of the region, once again displayed Chilean Patagonia at its very best with a course that reached the shores of Isla Navarino, making it the most southerly race in history.

The race is scheduled to finish for all competitors on February 17 and there are eight teams still out on the course hoping to complete it before the final cut-off time.

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