



WENGER PATAGONIAN EXPEDITION RACE

8th Edition: February 8th - 18th 2010

"The wildest and toughest race on Earth"

Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race 2010:

WILD WINDS HIT START OF PATAGONIAN RACE

10 de febrero de 2010

The famous wild winds of Chilean Patagonia challenged organisers and competitors to the limit as this year's Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race got underway dramatically in Tierra del Fuego on Tuesday.

A field of 56 international competitors hoped to kick off the 'world's toughest and wildest race' by kayaking across the Straits of Magellan but the Armada de Chile was forced to cancel it due to winds of 45knots and three metre swells.

When the race moved across the water for the new start, however, the teams immediately separated into two levels with some competitors struggling with the extreme headwinds and having to tow each other for support.

Helly Hansen-Prunesco captain Nicola MacLeod admitted conditions were tough and backed the decision to cancel the kayak. "We like the rough conditions, but we would have had some swimmers in those rough waves."

Team Switzerland was the first to make it through the opening trek, running most of the way, and team member Alex Gisler said: "The beach was quite deep shingle and there was lots of wind, so it was a pretty tough start to the race."

Helly Hansen-Prunesco was faster out of the checkpoint but Switzerland re-took the lead in the next section, a 110km mountain bike across wide open plains and rolling hills, and the pair were close together going into the first long trek of the race.

The race continues through a total of 600km of arduous terrain, and will end with a kayak through the Beagle Channel and a trek and bike into Puerto Williams, the world's southernmost town.

