



SALOMON/EMS WINS THE EXPEDITION

The Rocky Mountain West has long been a hotbed of adventure racing, but racers have often wondered why the region lacked a good multi-day race. With the successful debut of The Expedition race in Moab, Utah, last October, the only question left was "When can we sign up for next year's race?"

The four-day, 250-mile race with a \$20,000 cash purse put an exclamation point on AdventureXstream's racing season, as it sent teams from the desert floor to 11,600 feet in the snow-covered La Sal Mountains and back amid idyllic fall weather.

With a midnight start from the Red Cliffs Adventure Lodge at the edge of the Colorado River, the 13 teams of four and two didn't get to appreciate their surroundings until after they had ridden their mountain bikes 30 miles to the La Sal Mountains. AdventureXstream series winner Team Newcastle Limited/Crested Butte, fresh off a 23rd-place finish at Subaru Primal Quest, figured to be one of the favorites in this race. The foursome of Bryan Wickenhauser, Jon Brown, Jari Kirkland and Eric Sullivan put 20 minutes on the field by the first transition area, only to be caught and passed by teams Bagel Works/Loki and Salomon/EMS on the 30-mile trek that followed.

Salomon/EMS (Adam Chase, Emily Baer, Andrew Hamilton, Travis Macy) pulled ahead on the way back down to the bikes and held the lead for the rest of the race. The Colorado foursome continued to push the pace on a 30-mile mountain bike ride down from the mountains, and on a 24-mile paddle on the Colorado River.

While much of the paddle and almost the entire subsequent bike-rappel-trek-bike section were familiar to those racers who had done previous AdventureXstream Moab races, night navigation and some clever checkpoint placements created havoc for a few teams, including Timberland Colorado (which eventually dropped out) and Bagel Works/Loki (which was lost for eight hours).

The ensuing 35-mile mountain bike section started out on a dirt road that crossed Onion Creek more than a dozen times before hooking up with the Kokopelli Trail was a favorite of many racers. "We got up on the Top of the World Mesa around sunrise," said Team Mugshot's Julie Geng. "The riding was fun, the light was beautiful and the views of the La Sals above us and the canyons below were awesome."

At Dewey Bridge, where the Kokopelli Trail transects the Colorado River, racers

traded their bikes for running shoes and launched into a 20-mile desert jaunt north along the Kokopelli to Fish Ford, where they then switched to inflatable kayaks for a 10-mile paddle back to Dewey Bridge. A mandatory dark zone held lead teams Salomon/EMS and Newcastle/Crested Butte there overnight, but a 30-minute staggered start the next morning kept their finishing position intact after the 15-mile paddle to the finish line.

The second edition of The Expedition will return in early October 2005.

"There is no other place in the U.S. that has the diversity of terrain — mountains, deserts, canyons, rivers and cliffs and temperature variations — all in one area," race director Will Newcomer said. "There is an abundance of terrain and course options to keep the event new and fresh. It's ideal for adventure racing."

ADVENTUREXSTREAM THE EXPEDITION, MOAB, UTAH, OCTOBER 6-10

1. SALOMON/EMS (CO: ADAM CHASE, EMILY BAER, ANDREW HAMILTON, TRAVIS MACY) 2 DAYS, 9 HOURS, 54 MINUTES, \$8,000; **2. NEWCASTLE/CRESTED BUTTE** (4-PERSON CO-ED) 2:10:10, \$5,500; **3. NO LIMITS** (4-PERSON CO-ED) 2:11:25, \$4,000; **4. BAGEL WORKS/LOKI** (4-PERSON CO-ED) 2:16:52, \$1,500; **5. MUGSHOT** (4-PERSON CO-ED) 3:10:00, \$1,000.