

ESTORIL PORTUGAL XPD RACE

International Conference Estoril Portugal XPD Race 2006

Conclusions

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1. Adventure Racing Formats in Portugal

The evolution of Adventure Racing in Portugal has led to a model that is unique in the world. Time is no longer the main measuring process and instead decision-making in which CPs to visit is now the main factor at all levels of the competition. This model was largely appreciated by some foreigners, who have considered it as more social because as all teams try to get as many CPs as possible within certain time limits, this allows for a more regular contact among teams, while also allowing the co-existence within the same competition of teams with very different objectives. This is to say that this model allows teams to draw their own route and thus determine their “Adventure” objective.

(SILVA, A. G.)

2. International Adventure Racing Formats

The evolution and sustainability of Adventure Racing imply having to deal in a balanced way with the various existing controversial factors (support, motorized disciplines, stages or non-stop, navigation instead of orienteering, the use of animals, the use of your own boats, not knowing the competition or the location at all, the use of ropes when these are not a means of progression in the terrain, etc.)

(ROMERO, P.)

Without losing sight of the adventure racing philosophy, it is important to create a model that includes the various levels of competition, from promotion races (taking 6 to 10 hours) to world championships (4 to 5 days).

As far as categories are concerned, it is important to emphasize mixed gender teams and to stimulate women’s participation through free registration and women specific clinics and competitions. In Northern Europe it is easier to recruit women for this type of competitions. To have women in teams is just another challenge as far as the team management is concerned – mentally, physically and emotionally speaking!

(SALGUERO, A.)

In Brazil, the great variety of touristy places and natural beauties has helped to develop Adventure Racing.



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The originality and surprise/ “suspense” elements are always present both in the choice of places and in the choice of disciplines.

There are smaller races in order to promote and stimulate new participants, without need of a crew, and these can be solo or 2 member teams. Some of these promotion races take place on the day before bigger adventure races.

(CAMPOS, R.)

3. The Athletes’ Perspectives

Why do athletes race, what motivates them?

How to attract more teams, how to provide sponsors with feedback?

How to overcome phases such as the lack of motivation, deriving from the inability to go further?

(PEDROSA, P.)

In Italy there is little culture of outdoor sports and as a consequence the number of participants is low and it is difficult to organize competitions. This is also the main reason why competitions that come up are not continued.

(PONTERI, M.)

The panel was questioned as to the motivation of athletes to run adventure races. All were unanimous in mentioning the following relevant aspects:

- the fact that each race is always different from the other;
- the environment of the team, of friendship among racers, and,
- to know distant and magnificent places that can only be visited on foot, by boat or mountain bike.

4. The Media in Adventure Racing

Teams must always keep in mind and work permanently in order to provide the Media with information: by means of press releases, press conferences, making the news and providing photos.

It is a difficult and permanent task, but it is essential to ensure visibility of teams’ and athletes’ participations, both to the public and to the sponsors.

(AGUILLERA, M.)

Adventure Races are not easy to bring to the Media, for instance because races take place in distant locations, with the teams being isolated for hours and days. Sometimes there are such penalty criteria that only at the desk it is possible to know who the winner was. An Adventure Race should follow a simple format, in which the winner arrives first.

(HOWARD, R.)



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The big boom of Adventure Racing in Brazil brought saturation and thus less coverage by the Media of most of the competitions.

Little information gets to the press and it is difficult to go to the locations of the competitions (complicated logistics). On the other hand, new does not last for long and big events have an ephemeral coverage by the media.

In order to attract new participants it is necessary to change the focus, which should not be on the misfortune and suffering of racers, but on the spectacularity of their activities and the beauty of the landscapes.

(TOGUMI, W.)

In Portugal, the sponsoring of the competitions is essentially institutional and APCA along with FPO have developed their own team for producing video contents. These are then provided to the TV channels as a final product. These programmes have approximately 25 monthly minutes and they take into account technical and pedagogical aspects and they aim at showing the sport and making it attractive to new participants.

(SILVA, A. G.)

5. Safety and Responsibility

The prevention of injuries and accidents depends on good risk management. It is important to pay particular attention to environment conditions and the way these may affect athletes (weather, fauna, flora, clothing and equipment). One of the recommendations is never to take safety items from your backpack without replacing them immediately. And one should be aware that responsibility has three levels: the organisation, the athletes and the medical team.

(CAMPELLO, L.)

Risk management must be made inside the team. It is up to the team to decide whether they should take certain risks or not.

(FORSMAN, P.)

There are big differences as far as safety equipments are concerned all over the world, in many different competitions.

A discussion on the most common equipment and what is more important can help to find criteria to make up a list of basic compulsory equipment for all adventure races.

And not lose sight of “more important than to take the equipment, is to know how to use it”.

(ROMERO, P.)

6. International Governance in Adventure Racing

It is important and urgent to recognize Adventure Racing as a sport, both domestically and internationally.

Athletes and their teams should organise themselves and create leagues or national and regional federations in each country. These bodies, of a national or regional nature,



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should create an international body that would gather and govern all the National Federations and all the organisation of events, so as to ensure its continuity. The creation and the establishment of such an international body should happen at the occasion of a big international forum that would gather all adventure races.

It is important to determine governance, which should be the entity competent to award the titles of world champion, national champion or regional champion. This type of international, national and regional framework clearly has various advantages, since it allows:

- international acknowledgement;
- growing media coverage;
- raising better sponsors;
- coordination of schedules;
- fairness and ranking stability, and
- training of specialized sports agents.

As far as standardisation of regulations is concerned, it is important to rule, but not to generalise. Too many standards can destroy the Adventure aspect and limit originality and creativity of organisers.

It is important to create solutions so as to prevent organisers from getting tired of organising races.

This can be achieved through training and specialisation of agents in this sport and in the respective organisations.

The international body/ federation should additionally:

- gather all the agents involved;
- conciliate the organisers;
- include independent committees to arbitrate and settle conflicts;
- award the best in each year in the different areas, and
- create statistics concerning the competitions.



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