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XPD Portugal, Estoril: 6-9 December 2007

Race Reporting by Nicholas Mulder

ESTORIL PORTUGAL XPD RACE 2007

Surprise results at XPD Prologue
Thursday, 6 December 2007 (02h15)

The prologue of the Estoril Portugal XPD adventure race has created a unusual line up for the start of this 500km non-stop expedition race, a member of the Adventure Racing World Series. At 2100 GMT, 27 teams from around the world set off through the streets of Cascais, Portugal, for a 90-minute contest of running, tactical skill, and more than a touch of luck.

Armed with a high resolution satellite map and a questionnaire sheet, teams had to visit various points on a 56-block grid of the town, answering questions relating to the various town aspects as they went. The clues ranged from easy to cryptic, including "A6 - How many spikes are there on the main gate of house number 817A?" and "H4 - Which mouth will you find if you follow the signs?". After collecting a number of answers, teams were then able to approach one of two points where their answers were used in a virtual game of 'battleships'. Correct answers allowed teams to know whether they had 'hit' or 'missed' any of 8 battleships on the 56-block grid.



As teams sprinted off into the maze of streets in the old town, it soon became apparent that the systematic approach used by some teams would triumph. With the knowledge that no two battleships were to be found on adjacent blocks, teams visited various parts of town in an attempt to minimize the chances of a 'miss'. Luck would always play a big role, as well as knowledge of Portuguese and local customs and lifeways. Many of the teams struggled to make sense of irregular house and plot numberings, whilst others had difficulty navigating the small streets and alleys, despite the use of the map. By the end of the 90-minute time period, teams arriving back were drenched in sweat, despite the cool temperatures of approximately 10°C .

The final calculations produced a mixed bag of results, with some of the favourite teams down the rankings and other, unheralded teams on top. Two Portuguese all-male teams, Millennium BCP-Porto and Millenium BCP3, managed to sink 7 of the 8 battleships. Time difference was used to separate them and rank them first and second respectively. Antonio de la Rosa's Teva - La Pinilla of Spain was placed third with 5 'hits'. The following positions were filled by Salomon Navigator (POL), Club Pracas da Armada (POR) and Mullennium BCP2 (POR).

The results will be used to determine the start order of the main race on Thursday morning. At 0700 GMT, Millenium BCP-Porto will set off, followed 2 minutes later by Millennium BCP3. The remaining teams will all follow suit at 2-minute intervals, down to the last team at 0750. Of interest is that 6 of the top 8 places are filled by Portuguese teams, all successfully targeting four or more battleships. The majority of teams finished with 3 ships however, and a mere five-and-a-half minutes separate 13th from 20th, which is occupied by South Africa's Team Cyanosis. The team is slightly disappointed with this placing, but feel that they had some tough luck, visiting almost 60% of the grid, but only finding 38% of the battleships. They however are still looking forward to the first leg of the race and expect to move up the field quickly.

Other select results are as follows:

- 9th - Adventureteam Bornholm (Denmark)
- 10th - Feed the Machine (USA)
- 11th - Motorola SOS Mata Atlantica (Brazil and USA)
- 13th - Master Unit (Finland)
- 16th - Arena (Russia)
- 17th - Sleepmonsters / Inov-8 (UK)

Photos can be viewed at www.flickr.com/photos/21332583@N05/sets/

TREKKING



ONE TEAM SEVEN CHALLENGES

"Run when you can, walk when you have to,
crawl if you must; **just never give up**".

Dean Karnazes
Ultra distance runner

