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## XPD Portugal, Estoril: 6-9 December 2007

Race Reporting by Nicholas Mulder. Cascais, Portugal

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**PORTUGAL XPD RACE**  
2007

ONE TEAM SEVEN CHALLENGES  
**TotalSPORTS**  
CHALLENGE

### Strategy on the First Night Friday, 7 December 2007 (02h19)

Teams are now well into the first night of the Estoril Portugal XPD adventure race. I am no longer on site at the first transition, so cannot relay any updates on which teams have now headed out onto the 46km trekking leg, the first section of stage 2. I am thus left to speculate on what such an arduous leg in cold conditions will do to the teams.

The teams at the front of the field have been racing hard since the start gun. As expected, Teams Teva / La Pililla (Spain) and Motorola SOS Mata Atlantica (Brazil and USA) went out hard, as did the all-ladies team, Arena, as this was undoubtedly a favourite discipline. The high pace was answered by many other teams who formed a large pack, particularly on the arduous coasteering leg that followed the early morning roller blade.



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

Dean Karnazes  
Ultra distance runner



The coasteering course was brutal, with teams forced to climb and descend hill after hill. By the time they had reached the end of this second section, they had climbed over 890 metres, a significant amount for a 'coasteering' section. Although their leg muscles were probably fresh so early into a race, the effect will eventually make its presence felt. I suspect that the main bunch of teams (e.g. Salomon Navigator, Alpine Pro, Master Unit, Motorola and Lima Salmon) pushed slightly harder than many of them would have been comfortable with, as they tried to stay in contact with the race leaders, who were always visible climbing the next hill.

The weather is once again cold tonight, with temperatures close to 10°C. Normally many competitive teams plan a sleep strategy that allows them to forgo sleep on the first night, and then take 2 - 3 hours on subsequent ones. However, I think various factors will encourage almost all the top teams into taking some nap time on their inaugural night, probably on their return to food and race boxes at the end of their long trekking section. A combination of the tougher-than-expected coasteering, cold temperatures and a slight wind will send teams into their sleeping bags earlier than normal. Add to this the 90 minutes of physical exertion in the race prologue on Wednesday evening, and then teams may well decide to sleep when they arrive back at transition in the very early hours of Friday morning.

I've just driven over parts of the second section of stage 2, a 34km bike and trikke leg, which teams will complete with 2 mountain bikes and 2 trikke cycles. The race organisers have been giving hints that the course will get tougher as it progresses, and this is a good example. Teams will do well not to underestimate this leg as it climbs 440m, almost all of it in the latter stages when the teams enter the Monte Junto, or 'Nearby Mountains'.

Trikke bikes work well on flat roads and very slight gradients. They will not work well here. Towing systems will be allowed, but it will be a brave and maybe foolhardy cyclist who attempts to pull a team mate up the hills. Teams will need to consider carefully who in the team cycles and who trikkes. Which pair should be the stronger combination? We will be expecting to see some tired faces arriving at the end of the section at first light on Friday morning, lets hope that they are well rested beforehand.

Keep updated at [www.AR.co.za](http://www.AR.co.za) for all the latest news from the Estoril Portugal XPD.

Photos can be viewed at [www.flickr.com/photos/21332583@N05/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/21332583@N05/sets/)

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