

ESTORIL PORTUGAL XPD RACE

The day before

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Members from last year's winning team are back, but not racing for Team Sole. Paul Romero is racing for Motorola S.O.S. Mata Atlantica from Brasil, while Aurelio Olivar is racing with the Spanish team, TEVA-La Pinilla. It will be interesting to see the competition between them.

This Spanish team almost didn't make it this year. Despite having trained all season for this race, at last minute neither Monica nor Nubia, the two girls who usually race with the team couldn't get time off work, but Antonio de La Rosa, team captain told us that "luckily I met with Fernanda (the Brazilian who usually races with the team Atenah) in the race in Guadalupe and I invited her to race with us here. At first she told me that her ankle was not in shape, probably a stress fraction, but she only thought for five minutes. She soon confirmed she would come, we sorted out her flight and now we have a strong woman on our team and we are really motivated".

After a day of preparing everything for the race, the participants attended the race briefing, followed by the Prologue Stage. The briefing was held in a mix of English and Portuguese, with simultaneous translation.

The Prologue Stage was held in the centre of the town of Cascais. An original format that left many of the racers perplexed before it started. The organisers sent the athletes off looking for submarines hidden round the town in a life-sized game of battleships. Each team was given a map of the town, divided into squares and a list of questions, one for each square. The right answer gave the right to "shoot", hitting either the target or landing in water. The first team to get all eight submarines will set off first tomorrow morning.

The game was met with mixed feelings. Team 4, MillenniumBCP1, left the game after ten minutes, complaining that they couldn't read the map. Other teams had less trouble and were soon passing by the control tables to see whether they had hit lucky. Talking to the Danish team, Adventure

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Team Bornholm (Team 7), they said they found most of the questions alright, but after 20 minutes they hadn't found any submarines yet.

After the race we asked a few people what they thought of the game. Bjorn from the Swedish team SMS told us: "It was great fun. Unfortunately we didn't find too many 'submarines' at the start. In our second lap we found at least two of them but we were unlucky. We collected quite a lot of points, but plenty of them were 'water'. So I guess we will be starting a little later tomorrow but it really doesn't matter, it's good to get going and catch up with team after team along the course".

The prologue was won by the Portuguese team MillenniumBCP-Porto who found seven submarines and will be setting off first tomorrow, they were followed by , followed by MilleniumBCP3, who also found 7 submarines, but took one minute longer and TEVA-La Pinilla who found five submarines.

Nine Teams didn't participate in the Prologue, so they will be setting off at the back of the field.

Tomorrow the real race starts. Stage 1 will leave from Cascais, in front of the town hall. The first team will leave at 07:00, inline skating and by Trikke in direction of Guincho beach. This short section will be followed by a section of trekking and coasteering. The CPs that were planned for in the sea have had to be moved because of the rough sea conditions. The final section of this stage is a long section of mountain biking, most of which will be in the night...

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