

ESTORIL PORTUGAL XPD RACE

Limestone and fog

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As the second day of the Estoril Portugal XPD Race dawned many of the teams were passing through the Transition Zone (ZT)3, already half way through stage two of the race. Two sections of stage two ended at ZT3, as it formed a figure of eight. The only obligatory checkpoint on section three was at ZT3, meaning teams could skip the whole section if they chose. One team that decided to do this was SMS Sweden as one of their team members was having trouble eating throughout the night. They decided they had a better chance of recovering on the bikes, so as to be able to race better later. Several teams, including Sphera-Bombers-Lleida-Nats, only visited a few checkpoints.

The trekking loop out of ZT3 had climbing, rappel and downhill trikke activities at the checkpoints. The Russian girls of team Arena impressed everyone present with their skills as they flew down the rappel cords, barely giving the photographers gathered at the bottom of the cliff time to catch them.

The differences in the classification of different teams continued to grow during the day as some teams skipped checkpoints. Some teams had stopped during the night to sleep, both TEVA-La Penilla and Arena had stopped for about an hour and a half, while Alpine Pro/Nutrend didn't sleep at all. According to the journalist who is accompanying them, they usually don't stop at all to sleep when they are racing. Some teams managed their sleep badly and were caught out, needing to rest mid stage. Adventureteam Bornholm tried sleeping in a bus stop, but the cold soon got them moving along again.

At the ZT3 it was clear that some teams were in better shape than others. Most teams were still in good spirits, but it was clear in other teams there was some tension between members. The Polish team LIMA Salomon had had mechanical problems in one of the mountain biking sections with one of their dérailleurs. The Swedish team SMS, had one objective in mind as they set back off on the second Bike&Trikke section, a café where they

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could buy something “real” to eat as they were fed up of energy bars. This team also said they were struggling against tiredness and realised they had pushed too hard in the early sections, forgetting how important it is to get the balance, which they consider fundamental for success in a race like this.

Although team Motorola SOS Mata Atlântica slept for an hour and a half during the night, José Pupo, the Brazilian team member was clearly struggling as the team came through ZT3. The team made it back to Transition Area (AT)1, and set off on the mountain biking section 1 of stage 3, but then had to pull out. He is now recovering in a hotel, while his team will continue without him.

Stage three started with a mountain biking section that took the racers to yet another mountain range, the Serra de Candeeiros. One of the activities in this section was a short section of caving, including a short (5.5 m) abseil into a gallery, from which they could then walk out. The first three teams to the cave were the Czechs Alpinepro/Nutrend, and almost two hours later the Spanish team TEVA-La Pinilla and the Portuguese team MillenniumBCP2. By 22h00 only nine teams had completed the section and visited all the checkpoints. All the other teams had skipped checkpoints.

It would seem dogs really are attracted to Adventure Racing. When the teams arrived at ZT4 they were all met by a friendly dog that greeted them like they were coming home. Even more welcoming was the hot soup and other food available at the bar in the Cultural Centre of Chãos, where ZT4 was set up.

Most teams were setting off for the second section of Stage three (trekking) as it began to drizzle, the fog rolled back in and night set in. Many of the teams will be walking throughout the night across difficult limestone terrain. Stage three ends at Olhos de Agua. Stage four starts with another mountain biking section, followed by a section of inline skating, then the river paddling section and finally a trekking section.

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