

ESTORIL PORTUGAL XPD RACE

From land to water

by Louize Hill/ Filomena Gomes/ W. Togumi

Day three of the Estoril Portugal XPD Race started off bright and clear and the sunny weather was a welcome change from the fog and drizzle of yesterday. Stage three ended at Transition Area (AT) 2 at Olhos de Água (Alcanena). This area was bustling from the crack of dawn, and the whole morning. Most teams stopped here for a while to rest, almost all were clearly exhausted from the 40 km trekking they had completed during the night. This stage had brought the teams from the mountains down to the flood plains of the River Tejo, and the scenery changed dramatically. At AT2 it also became clear that there were changes on the leader board, especially amongst the teams at the end.

There were long gaps between the teams arriving and leaving from AT2. Some of the teams decided to stop along the way to sleep, while others decided to sleep at AT2. The Brazilian athlete José Pupo of team MOTOROLA, who had pulled out yesterday due to exhaustion was “rescued” from the hostel where he had stopped and decided to stay and was brought to AT2 early in the morning. Talking to him, he said he had been unable to keep up with the rest of the Team members, and that he probably hadn’t fully recovered from Ecomotion five weeks ago. He planned to keep on following the race and his team’s progression. However, they decided to quit after the mountain biking section 1 (stage 4). José also stressed how impressed he had been with the race organization and the Portuguese adventure racing format. He considers this to be one of the best he has ever seen, allowing both strong teams and less strong ones to finish the race. Also, it is possible to actually follow the competition since teams are never too isolated.

During the morning the Portuguese team Vulcano Mix also decided to quit, and were transported to AT2, due to one of the team members being injured. The remaining team members decided to continue after the paddling section. The Portuguese Team CAOS also decided to quit due to

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an injury. The team couldn't conceal their disappointment. Team MOTOROLA SOS Mata Atlantica, were the last in to AT2, but still in a good mood which impressed all those present. They announced they planned to do the bike ride as it was such a fabulous day, but were quitting once they arrived at the start point of the paddling. They couldn't miss this bright sunny day and they really wanted to ride their bikes on to section 1 (stage 4).

The Portuguese Team Brisa arrived at AT2 determined to go on, even though they had decided to skip sections 1 and 2 (stage 4) to ensure they would arrive in time to start the paddling section. They stopped for a while at AT2, to have something to eat and were soon ordering steaks and chips to regain energy.

The first team to start the approximately 50km long paddling section was the Portuguese Team Freitas Outdoor, who also finished the section first. Nonetheless, the latest ARWS classification remains with the Czech team Alpinepro/Nutrend/Merida in the lead, followed by the Spanish TEVA-La Pinilla and then the Czechs from Team Tilak/Opavanet/Merida. These teams were the only teams to have visited all the checkpoints on the course.

Tomorrow is the last day of the XPD. During the night most the racers will start stage 5, with another mountain biking section, followed by trekking section with abseiling at one checkpoint, against a backdrop of the Moorish castle and the Romantic Palace of Pena in Sintra. The race will finish with a sea paddling section with an optional free-diving underwater CP, where the athletes will have to copy a drawing! Tomorrow promises to bring an interesting day.

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