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XPD Portugal Strengthens World Series in Europe

By Rob Howard

An expected field of 60 teams of four will race in December's Portugal XPD, the latest addition to the ARWorld Series. The race will take place on the Estoril Coast and in the West Coastal Areas of Central Portugal, with international teams coming from Portugal, Spain, France, Ireland, Finland, Denmark, Brazil and several other countries.



Portugal XPD Event coordinator, Alexandre Silva, says that this year's event will bring to Portugal many teams eager to qualify to 2008 ARWC in Brazil, especially the many Latin American teams that will give the race a special taste. A large number of Spanish teams are also entering as a result of the cooperation between the two countries in the development of their respective national AR Cups.

The race course and disciplines are already set and are now in final testing and they include up to 11 different disciplines that will allow the teams to discover and explore a very rugged and tricky terrain. This year's race will cover 450 kms of Europe's westernmost terrain, incorporating the coastline, rivers, forests, farmland and high hills of the region.

Alexandre Silva says competitors will need to be prepared for spectacular coasteering, long and difficult forest mountain bikes, tricky orienteering, scenic paddling sections and a highly tactical race format. This format is unique among international races, offering the option to miss certain stages and requiring good orienteering skill and judgement.

"In the Natural Parks of the region, some race stages will require a special environmental awareness by the racers in order to comply with the local conservation rules and prove AR is a fully sustainable activity for these sensitive areas. Over the years, Portugal Adventure Racers Association (APCA) has struggled to open these natural areas to AR due to careful route planning and education of the racers."

This year's event will start with a Conference on AR, held in Cascais on Sunday, December 2nd, followed by clinics for organizers and race staff, held in Estoril on Monday and Tuesday, December 3rd and 4th.

The 4 day, non-stop race, will get underway on Thursday, December 6th, and will start at Estoril with the course details remaining secret until the competitors briefing on Wednesday, December 5th.

All of the top Portuguese teams are already signed up and well as numerous international entries, so teams considering taking part should study the race website at www.portugalxpdrace.com and make enquiries about entry soon.

