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XPD Race and Conference in Estoril

By Rob Howard

Teams, organisers, media and sports administrators are preparing to travel to the Portuguese resort of Estoril (well known for it's Casino and motor racing track), for the Portugal XPD race and an international AR conference.



The conference and a series of specialist clinics first took place last year and were an acclaimed success. The subject of this year's conference is 'Adventure Racing; Tourism and/or Sport' where the keynote speaker is Geoff Hunt, organiser of the ARWorld Series. Among the panellist for a series of 3 discussions during the day are Said Aiach Neto, the organiser of EcoMotion Pro in Brazil, which will be the 2008 World Championship race, Scott Smith the organiser of Rock and Ice Ultra and well known athletes like Karine Baillet of France.

The conference takes place on Sunday December 2nd and is followed next day by a series of more detailed specialist clinics including the subjects of Risk, Team and Race Management, Course Design, the Psychology of Racing, Marketing and Sponsorship and Media Coverage.

The race, which is now part of the ARWorld Series, takes place on the magnificent Estoril Coast and the course will make the most of the natural wonders of the municipalities of Cascais and Sintra and its magnificent Natural Park. The best Portuguese teams will be taking part, alongside visiting international teams from 10 other nations.

The race format favours strong orienteers and good tacticians, and begins with an urban multi-activity stage on December 5th, which will decide the order of the chasing start the following day. This first start will be on mountain bikes, and the following 5 main stages will include trekking, sea kayaking, trikke and inline skating and snorkelling. The national park in Sintra is hilly and forested, there are many trails and tracks, and the sea conditions will dictate whether the canoeing and snorkelling can take place. (Last year the sea was too rough.)

Of the teams on the start line the most experienced are probably Teva-la Pinilla of Spain, led by Antonio de la Rosa (who are coming direct from the IGWA race in Guadeloupe), Czech team Tilak Opavanet, Feed the Machine from the USA, Cyanosis of South Africa and Salomon Navigator of Poland. It's sure to be a strong competition is any of these teams could be a winner, and take up the free place at EcoMotion Pro next year.

SleepMonsters will of course have full coverage of all the conference, clinics and the race itself.

