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# ADVENTURE RACING

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XPD Portugal, Estoril: 6-9 December 2007

Race Reporting by Nicholas Mulder. Cascais, Portugal

**Tough Early Sections take their Toll**  
Friday, 7 December 2007 (12h00)

A thick mist is envelopng the Montejunto, a range of mountains north of Lisbon, Portugal. In the mountain village of Pragança, teams have been arriving at a romantic estate for the central transition between the mountain bike / trikke section and a mountainous trek including rock climbing and downhill trikking. All of the teams are showing signs of various degrees of exhaustion. The high pace of day 1 has definitely slowed after 24 hours of racing. Various teams took the opportunity to sleep last night, particularly both Teva / La Pinilla (Spain) and Motorola SOS Mata Atlantica (Brazil / USA), each of whom slept for 90-minutes.

Many teams have suffered as a result of the high pace at the front of the field on day 1. I had a good chat with Sweden's Team SMS (it stands for Sundbyberg Mulisport, a Stockholm-based adventure racing club). Bjorn Malmgren admitted that his team had probably been pushed into racing a bit beyond their limits on the early sections, with one team member finding it difficult to get food down during the night. They had slowed considerably and elected to miss a few optional checkpoints. With the reduced pace, they are hoping that their bodies recover sufficiently to allow them to speed up again later today when they get back onto their bikes.



South Africa's Team Cyanosis also proceeded quickly through transition, dropping their 2 bikes and 2 trikkes before heading out for the trekking loop on the Motejunta range. They had described the trekking leg at the beginning of the second stage as gruelling. The 47km leg took teams over a vast area, including back to the west coast for a check point above a rocky peninsula. They are in fair spirits however, now having moved up to approximately 6th position from their 10th placing at midday on Day 1.

Determining the leaders and placings is now becoming harder and harder for journalists as teams elect to miss optional check points. The Portugal XPD is not a straight-forward start to finish adventure race, but instead requires teams to visit as many check points as possible over the fixed 81 hours of the race. Teams progress through various sequential race sections, each section with various opening and closing times. Most teams managed to reach all the check points in each of these stages on day 1, but as teams start to tire, they will elect to slow down and skip the tougher check points so as to save time and energy. By the end of day 2, we should be able to get a rough determination of the leaders at the end of each stages by comparing the total number of check points they had visited by the end of that stage.

At the end of mountain trek, a few teams have still managed to visit all check points till date. This gives us a fair approximation of who the leaders are. Team Master Unit of Finland were the first team to return off the mountain and head off on the return leg of the mountain biking and trikke cycling section (mostly downhill this time!). They had a half hour lead on Alpine Pro / Nutrend / Merida (Czech), who also has visited all check points so far, whilst Team Teva / La Pinilla of Spain were another hour back. The next few teams are still out in the mountains, with Team Tilak / OpavaNet / Merida (Czech) expected in next.

Some top teams who have missed a few check points are also spread out amongst these teams. This includes Team Ore of Denmark, who have missed 2 checkpoints so far, and Salomon Navigator of Poland, who have missed one. These two teams have done shorter distances than the others so far, and it waits to be seen what physical advantage this will bring in the latter stages of the race.

Keep updated at [www.AR.co.za](http://www.AR.co.za) for all the latest news from the Estoril Portugal XPD.

Photos can be viewed at [www.flickr.com/photos/21332583@N05/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/21332583@N05/sets/)

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