

Yet, I couldn't help but think about the remaining 13 CPs, conspicuously unpunched, that we were going to miss, including a huge rappel down a cliff in the highlands near Chimborazo Volcano and the kayaking stretch through the jungle.

Huairasinchi literally translates to "the wind's strength" in Kichwa, alluding to the phenomenal challenges that we would encounter in this world-class adventure race. For us, the wind dealt us a hard blow when we lost our teammate days before the competition, and yet another when we discovered his replacement was in no shape for a race of this caliber. Even if we had been able to finish the race, I imagine I would still feel that addictive tug of adventure racing. Somehow you can just never get enough. We discovered a certain beauty and power in that feeling of resignation JJ mentioned at the starting line...ride it out and make the most of it!

Jacob Thompson is a freelance writer. He and his friends, Sean and Goat (along with some guest riders), are out to ride the spine of the Western Hemisphere from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. They are currently in Ecuador where they just competed in their first adventure race. For more information about their journey, visit their site at: www.ridingthespine.com.

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