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Elizabeth's adventures...

Adventure racing, triathlon, mud, hills and mountain bikes

THURSDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2009

A Portuguese Rat Race



The race started with a format that was very familiar to the British teams. A mini 'rat race' event where we had to run round Estoril

About Me



Elizabeth A

Got into adventure racing in 2003 and since then have been trying to learn to kayak, mountain bike, swim and have plenty of fun along the way. I've set up this blog to share my photos and adventures with friends and family, as well as track my big goals for racing in 2009. (I've entered them because they're far away and therefore easy)

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[Races, Goals and Dreams for 2009](#)

collecting checkpoints by undergoing a series of games and challenges. We opted to try our hand at skittles, petanque, orienteering, ski-walking, swimming, abseiling and kayak surfing. This last one was actually cancelled due to the massive surf and I'm quite glad about that - I think it could have ended in tears and the swim was exciting enough!

There was a real party atmosphere during this stage with lots of whooping and high fives every time we passed another team. I don't know what other world championship race you would get that in but it felt like an amazing thing to be part of and there was a massive buzz round the town.

We got our first indication here that we needed to pay attention to race rules as when the organiser says 100 points are to be collected he means 100. Team Nike, with 105 points were going to be pretty disappointed when they found out... Clever planning was going to be really important throughout.



Rat race complete, we moved onto the skating. Starting off on cobbles was not the best for us to look 'stylish' and we all heaved sighs of relief when we eventually made it to the cycle path which was relatively flat. We tried to go in a pace line, like Don had shown us and it definitely worked a bit, especially with the strong winds along the coast. The temptation was to just hold onto the backpack of the person in front so I suspect that Philip ended up pulling the rest of us for a good part of the way. Being concious that trashing a team mate in the first day wasn't a good plan we tried to rotate a bit and I think I got my fair share of pulling up some of the hills (ouch!). None of us expecting that 4hrs into the race we'd already be feeling a bit knackered but it's amazing what your body can recover from.



Ironman

Half Ironman - done (Aberfeldy)

Run the Red Cuillin on Rum, after paddling there!

Trekking in Patagonia

Everest Marathon

Cycle the Manali-Leh Highway (India)

Kayak round St Kilda

Visit Greenland

Race across the alps (running or biking???)

Take part in an expedition adventure race

Swim the channel (maybe in a relay)

Visit Orkney

Deerstalker-done!

Glen Affric Duathlon-done!

Cairgorm mountain classic 15 June-done!

Open 12-done!

Open 24 - done!

Dirty Triathlon-done

Scottish Coast to Coast -done!

Paddle into Fingal's cave

Traverse of Cuillin Ridge

Learn to roll in a kayak (got the new 2*)

Big Ben Nevis Triathlon

A century ride! -done!

Swim three times a week and get faster-done!

Blog Archive

▼ 2009 (81)

► December (4)

▼ November (6)

Night orienteering

The final countdown

Stage 3 - enter the sleepmonsters

Stage 2 - a true adventure

A Portuguese Rat Race



The skating led us to the first trekking section of the race and then onto a bike leg, with a quick stop off for via Ferrata along the way and then another trek back into town. How we were supposed to manage this all in one day I haven't a clue but it taught us that the race as a whole was bigger than we were capable of and we'd have to be strategic about what we were cutting out, so we could still make the end.



I was really glad of Pyro popping up all over the course to take photos and shout encouragement. Surrounded by so many elite teams and such a massive undertaking it would have been really easy to feel we didn't deserve to be there and would never make it. We had to carry our bikes up a never-ending staircase at one point and that felt really crushing. Dan swapped bikes with me so I could carry his superlight instead of my own big lump of metal. But even that was too much so without saying anything he took it back and continued up the staircase with a bike over each shoulder. I don't think I even had the energy to say thanks...

Eventually, we made it back to the centre of town, half an hour late past the cut-off but not the last team back. It seems the 'monster' nature of the course had taken a few people by surprise. We got changed in an alleyway (realising we were covered head to toe in seaweed from the swim!) and were then bussed to 'somewhere'. I still haven't worked out exactly where, maybe north east. I should get a map of Portugal.



The arrival

- ▶ October (6)
- ▶ September (10)
- ▶ August (4)
- ▶ July (10)
- ▶ June (10)
- ▶ May (6)
- ▶ April (10)
- ▶ March (7)
- ▶ February (3)
- ▶ January (5)
- ▶ 2008 (2)

Blogs I like to look at

The Corbett Round 2009
Number crunching instead of bones...

Fond memories of the Heb...





One of the big things in the race was the difference between supported and unsupported teams and being one of the 'unsupported' we started to feel the pinch this first night. While many teams turned up to find tents erected and a hot dinner waiting we had a 4hr wait for our kit boxes to arrive. Most crucially, these contained our maps for the next section so we had a late night marking maps when they finally arrived.

Still, I'm sure sleep deprivation is all part of it.

Next time I'll have a support crew!

Posted by Elizabeth A at [11:52](#)

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