

Adventure Racing World Champs - Kiwi finish in top 5



Sunday, 15 November 2009



Strolling down the beach on the Portuguese coast may seem a world away from the extreme world of adventure racing, but for most teams at the end of the 910km 2009 Adventure Racing World championship the racing was over when they collected

..the last check point, taking their time savoring the final moments to the finish in Peniche.

The 2009 World's haven't disappointed with close racing, leader changes and a new world champion. It's been very frustrating at times to determine who was leading and how the Kiwi's were placed after the official leader board went offline for four days and the GPS tracking was somewhat unreliable. Without the passion and support of Orion support crew Karyn & Roy, Lynne back in NZ deciphering the messages and Annie following race, we would have been light on news.

Through the mid section of the race there was an epic Kiwi battle up front between defending champions Orion Health (Wayne Oxenham, Stu Lynch, Anna Berthelson & Brent Edwards) and Nike Beaver Creek with Kiwi's Chris Forne & George Christison, paired up with Americans Mike Kloser & Monique Merrill. Nike were moving slightly faster and picked up two extra check points (CP's) and one bonus, elevating them clearly to the top of the leader board and looking the likely champions barring a major incident in the last 180kms.

Photos - ARWC



Orion at the time were still well positioned racing for a podium placing against British team Helly Hansen and Swedish team Lundhags with Kiwi Aaron Prince.

The Kiwi 1-2 at the front of the World's was about to change with just five short MTB, trek and kayak legs remaining to the finish.

Orion Health walked out of the last transition and onto a short 10km trek, in the confusion amongst other teams captain Wayne Oxenham walked around a landmark separated and then waited for his team. Some time later Stu was on the emergency phone reporting a missing member, while Oxenham had joined up with Nike, a few hours later and Orion were united. While lucky not to be DNF'ed from the race, they did incur penalties that pushed them down the leader board and off the podium for the first time since 2006. Orion went on to cross the finish line in Peniche with a total of 48 CP's placing 4th overall.

After the race Oxenham commented how their strategy and collecting CP's unfolded "we never really figured out what to do once we got a bit behind on the course after getting lots of CP's and bonuses early on."

Kiwi Aaron Prince racing in Swedish team Lundhags started off their 2009 world title race with a convincing win on the first day. Through stages 2 to 4 raced constantly in the top 5 and was rewarded with a third place overall on 50 CP's.



Nike's hopes of another world title were lost with a navigation mishap, when they chose to miss the mountain trekking leg on the final stage missing valuable CP's. Forne, Nike's navigator talking to Sleepmonsters commented "We made a mistake and thought we had to finish the following bike leg by 02.00 today, when in fact we only had to start by then, then we cut out the trekking stage and missed too many CP's." Nike crossed the finish line on 50 CP's two shy of new World Champions British team Helly Hansen and one up on bonus points.

Defending World title holder Oxenham was happy to see the title go to Helly Hansen "We have raced with these guys (Helly Hansen) lots of times in the past and they are a really top bunch and deserving of the title after racing so smart and well!".

Overall Oxenham paid tribute to the Portugal Worlds "enjoying the sensation of having completed an extremely challenging and very long course".

Nga Rakau - Mark Struthers, Tim Cochrane, Neil Kerrison & Fiona McBryde raced through to 33rd with a strategy that saw them aiming to meet stage cutoff and gather a few CP's in each stage along the way.

For most of the racing hasn't finished for the Kiwi's. When they should be resting their feet and celebrate the 2009 Worlds they now have to race around with just 20 hours to clean gear and pack before getting on the first of a series of long flights tomorrow morning (7am their time).

Final Placings

Pos.	Team	CPs	Bon.	Time
1	#38 <input type="checkbox"/> Helly Hansen - Prunesco	52	5	128:32:58
2	#46 <input type="checkbox"/> Team Nike/Beaver Creek	50	6	127:38:36
3	#08 <input type="checkbox"/> Lundhags Adventure	50	5	127:34:52
4	#01 <input type="checkbox"/> OrionHealth.com	48	5	127:59:25
5	#10 <input type="checkbox"/> Navigator RaidLight	48	0	128:23:39
6	#07 <input type="checkbox"/> Quechua	45	4	126:24:55
7	#04 <input type="checkbox"/> Buff Thermocool	43	4	128:04:06
8	#20 <input type="checkbox"/> ERTIPS	41	2	127:00:03
9	#13 <input type="checkbox"/> AdventureTeam.dk	40	4	114:30:41

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