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Helly Hansen / Prunesco Wins the World Championships

Submitted by [AR World Series Blog](#) on November 17, 2009 – 6:51 am [No Comment](#)



Ocean waves crashed to my right; more waves to my left. I sat on a narrow spit of beach with the Atlantic to either side. The beach landscape here was stunning, with sandstone formations and pillars of rock jutting up at extreme angles. It's as if rock structures from the Utah desert had been magically transported to the ocean side. This was the scenic finish to the 2009 Adventure Racing World Championship, and while the race organizers took heat for their unorthodox race format, nobody can question their selection of dramatic race finish locations.

For a specific look at the race format, see [this piece published earlier today.](#)

The real racing started on Monday morning Nov 9, with teams battling through the tallest mountains in Portugal and reaching over to the Spanish border. Besides the furious pace set by the race leaders, the early highlight had to be the medieval castle that served as an early transition area for the course. Teams made their way through the course, struggling through cold, wind, and dense fog much of the way.



2009 AR World Champions, Helly Hansen/Prunesco

Early reports had Nike firmly in the lead, and with the withdrawal due to medical reasons of several top Scandinavian teams, the race looked like it was Nike's to lose. However, quietly at the transition area of the first paddle leg, the Helly Hansen/Prunesco team from the UK took their time and made decisions worthy of a future World Champion. In the words of Tom Gibbs, navigator for the team, "We set out the maps to see the next 2 legs (65km trek, 160km bike) and we knew we couldn't do it all before the cut off. The run was very linear so that only left the bike as having opportunity. We worked out we could cut 3 Cp's and 80 km off the route with an easy 35km ride on road. A quick look at a road atlas showed us the key town name we had to head too. No other team did this in transition and I think it is where our victory charge started."

From this point forward, Helly Hansen made race cut-offs in plenty of time and put the pressure to a fatigued Nike team.

The race continued West towards the Atlantic coast, and Helly Hansen's lead solidified. One final turning point came on the final night, when Helly Hansen opted to remain in the final transition area to catch one more hour of sleep. To quote Tom Gibbs again, one spectator commented, "You cannot sleep. You are leading the World Championship!"; Tom's reply: "That is exactly why we sleep."

That kind of poise, to recognise you need to rest so you can go harder for the finish, comes only with experience and this Helly Hansen/Prunesco team carries the scars from many previous races. Their full story has many chapters; chapters with race withdrawals and disappointments in places such as Sweden and Scotland. The pieces finally came together for them, however, and they raced on passion and intelligence to beat the best in the world. Their story ended on sunny Peniche beach in Portugal, crossing the finish line as World Champions with showers of champagne and crashing waves in the background.

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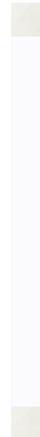


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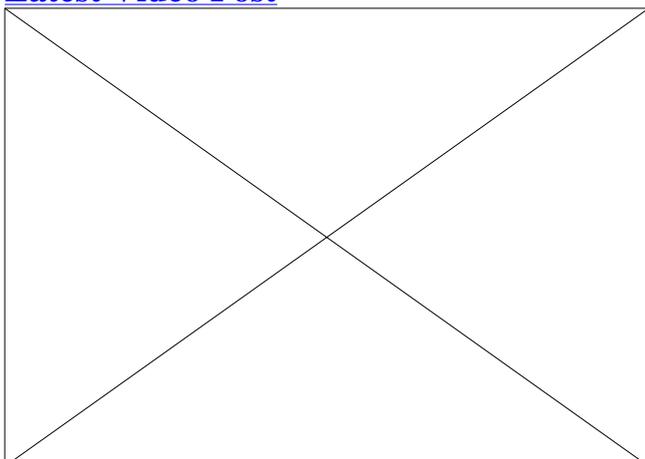


Monavie-Cannondale team worked their way up the volcanoes on Stage 3. Tinker Juarez did an outstanding climb towards the Irazú Volcano, he ascended like it was his last climb. Jeremiah Bishop followed Juarez with a gap of close to 3 minutes along with Deiber Esquivel and

Marc Trayter, both trying to break the trio apart and move upfront on the hunt for Tinker.

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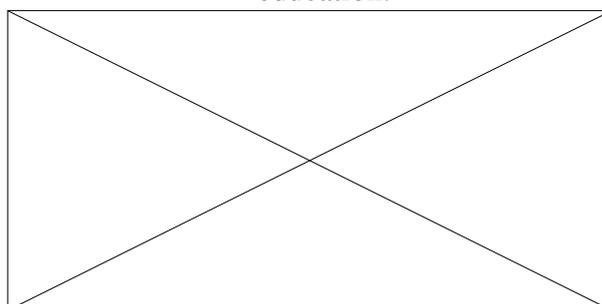
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