



GoLite/Timberland Sprint takes 2nd at Moab Xstream Expedition

posted Oct 09, 2006 @ 12:38 PM by Chris Boyd



100 Year Storm. That's how we were told CNN was reporting the weather that socked in on the Moab, Utah area starting Thursday evening. At the start time of the race, 7pm Thursday, the skies were turning from day into night and the beautiful Moab landscape was saying goodnight to some 100+ racers who were about to set out on a 300+ mile 3-4 day non-stop racing adventure. Setting out in a mass start on mountain bikes we set out for CP1 & CP2. Keeping close company with Bagel Works we pacelined up the access roads then onto double track climbing nearly 4000 feet up to CP2 where we'd receive new maps and points for the night orienteering section. Arriving within 2 minutes of the then leaders, Bagel Works, we made quick work of plotting the 9 new CP's, determining our strategy and route choices before heading out into the now rainy night. The rules for this section of the course allowed racers to gather as many of the points as possible in any order, of which CP10 was mandatory. For each missed CP, teams would be penalized 2hrs. Also noteworthy is that the section after this was on the water and teams were not permitted to start before 7am and not after 11am.

In the night orienteering section we chose to tackle the CP's in counterclockwise order, allowing us more freedom when deciding how we'd approach CP3 (which was far off trail and up over 12,000feet)(if we went clockwise we would have had to choose whether or not to skip a CP early on, committing us to penalties, our approach allowed us to make that decision as the race progressed thus having a better handle on the situation when the decision time came). The rain that began during the mountain bike up continued and intensified as the night grew older, peaking for us while on the ridgeline east of CP8, accompanied by 60mph sustained winds with gusts in the 80's. So hard we were crawling on our hands and knees the last 800 vertical feet to the summit. Come 7am we had returned from the orienteering course with 8 of the 9 possible points. From the orienteering section we biked back to the start/finish to transition into boats for a 20+ mile paddle down the swollen Colorado river. Our transition was swift, nutritious (yummy breakfast burrito's to sustain the efforts before and to come) and organized.



Following the water section we transitioned into our running and climbing gear and set out in search for CP14, the rappel. Traversing our way along the sandstone we were welcomed by the first sign of blue skies and rain free air. It was spectacular and the views from the 100+ foot rappel looking out toward the towering sandstone and the nearby arch were ones we won't soon forget.

After a spectacular rappel we set out and up Long Canyon in route to Gemini Bridges. The rain, now having fallen for over 12 hours non-stop had created waterfalls off of the towering canyon walls of Moab. Quite a special event to have witnessed during our adventure, seriously hundreds of impromptu waterfalls adorned our routes wherever we traveled. But with this amount of rain comes consequences. On the well established road that climbs up Long Canyon are some 7+ stream crossings. The magnitude and length of rainfall had swollend the stream into a full class river completely WIPING OUT the roads. We were crossing the swollen, raging, rock and soil filled river at each of these washouts, handing our bikes carefully to our teammates as we slowly progressed up the canyon.

At Gemini Bridges we were notified of alterations to the course based on the immense weather system and the impact it was having on the course and on the general safety of the racers. From there we were notified that only four 4-person teams were still on the "long course" and that we should return to the last TA to continue the course, in a modified fashion.

The route back was long, making that bike section just short of 40k, we would then set out on the next section of the course which was ironically enough another biking section (a paddle and trek were removed for safety reasons) that would take us nearly 80k through Moab, out Sandflats road and onto the Kokopelli Trail.

As we transitioned we were once again reminded of the strength and resolve of this 100 Year Storm. The skies, which had been clear and rain free for nearly 20 minutes, once again opened up, almost in defiance of our commitment to continue. As we sat together eating our rice and chicken in the back of the FJ Cruiser we could hear the storm unloading, now more ferociously than before. Knowing we were about 1.5 hours back from the number one team we set out steady, ready for a long and character-building night on the bikes.

During these hours and under these conditions some teams fall apart, others simply slow while others almost thrive, seeming to nearly enjoy the discomfort, sleep depravity and inclement weather. We fall into the third group, welcoming weather and conditions that help us set our resolve and experience to work for us. This long, and I do mean long, ride took us up the Kokopelli Trail for miles and miles of rain soaked, mud riddled trails. From 9pm Friday through nearly 4am Saturday we tackled the elevation gain this section had to offer, reaching CP25 where the race was once again modified.

Here we were told the remaining trails were not only unrideable but the actual CP's were underwater. This meant that the race would now find its end back at race HQ. We took a straight shoot down the washed out roads leading back to Red Cliffs Lodge, reaching nearly 60k per hour during some sections, while in others we were reacting quickly to avoid the road washouts, rocks in road, and stream crossings which were not there days earlier.

Brad McLean, Jen Segger-Gigg, Keith Bushaw and Chris Boyd along with trusted support crew Robin Bushaw set out to Moab on Wednesday in search of adventure. Today we write to you as the newly crowned Adventure Xstream Series Champions and 2nd place finishers of the Expedition race.

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