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## XStream Dream

By Aaron Unterreiner  
Special to the Herald

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COURTESY TODD NEWCOMER

Todd Newcomer Competitors are seen participating in the 2003 AdventureXstream race, which started at Durango Mountain Resort. This year's race takes place June 12-13 and is the second event in a five-race series.

The city of Durango, like so many cities in the Four Corners, has a reputation for being a playground to outdoor enthusiasts. Long considered a mountain bike mecca for its elaborate network of trails, Durango has a new sport to wrap its enthusiasm around - adventure racing.

On June 12, Will Newcomer, and his Durango-based company, Gravity Play Sports, will host the second leg of the AdventureXstream Race Series.

"Adventure racing is a full spectrum of courses that are about three hours long each, and we have 12-hours, 24-hours and multi-day events," said Newcomer, who is the race director.

"There's three main events that you'll find at any race: Mountain biking, trail running and kayaking, and with each course there's navigation involved. You have to plot your course using a map and compass, then figure out where all the checkpoints are and which is the best way to get to each checkpoint."

But adventure racing is not restricted to the typical X-Games. Next weekend's race through the San Juan Mountains will include any combination of mountain biking, paddling, trekking, rope skills, inline skating and navigation.

The Durango race is unique because the 24-hour course will serve as a United States Adventure Racing Association National Championship qualifier. The USARA is the governing body over the adventure racing circuit, much like NORBA oversees the mountain bike circuit.

"Durango is definitely a mountain bike mecca with the Iron Horse and NORBA Nationals," Newcomer said. "It's a great place to put on a mountain bike race. It's a

#### Volunteers needed

The fourth annual Durango AdventureXstream Adventure Race needs volunteers to work 12-hour shifts beginning June 12.

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great venue, just the course and being in the San Juans, and there's a special caliber of athletes in the Southwest.

"There's a good handful (of locals), but really we get people from all over the country," he said. "They find us and Durango is obviously a good tourist location."

Opening day of the AdventureXstream Race Series was March 27 in Moab. Durango is series stop No. 2 before Breckenridge, Vail and the finale, or "The Expedition" on Oct. 6-11 in Moab. Competitors can race solo or with teams of two or four. The first-place four-person coed team in the expedition earns a spot in the USARA National Championships. Gravity Play Sports foots the bill.

Volunteers receive a voucher for entry into another adventure race, meals, T-shirts and other goodies.

For more information, call 259-7771 or log on at [events@gravityplay.com](mailto:events@gravityplay.com).

"The team categories are up for prizes so they can accumulate points in each race, and if you race in all five, you can drop your lowest score," Newcomer said. "The top three teams gain entry into the expedition race and the expedition race has \$20,000 in prizes. We have sponsors come on board and that helps, but most of it comes out of our pocket."

And while the championships are reserved for the professionals, adventure racing has a demographic that extends beyond the experts.

"We obviously have elite athletes that excel in all the disciplines, but the majority are weekend warriors that have done each of the events, but are strong in one and average in others, and are out there just to have fun," Newcomer said. "Adventure racing has always been a team sport, there's a lot of solo, but the team is what makes adventure racing unique."

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