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AdventureXstream series stops at DMR for second leg

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Special to the Herald

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COURTESY PHOTO

Contestants line up for the start prior to last year's AdventureXstream race at Durango Mountain Resort.

The AdventureXstream race taking off today through the San Juan National Mountains in Durango will have to go on without one of the series' best competitors.

Mike Freeburn, a Durango local, is sitting out the second leg of the five-part AdventureXstream Racing Series to concentrate on another adventure race - the Red Bull Divide and Conquer Challenge which takes place next weekend in Silverton and Durango. Freeburn captured the overall championship in the Xstream series' opening race last month in Moab, Utah, but is currently training for the 27-mile traverse down the upper Animas River.

"It would be stretching things pretty thin to do both," Freeburn said. "For me personally, I would be stretched a little thin."

The Xstream 24-hour competition is an United States Adventure Racing Association National Qualifier. Although Freeburn has already earned a spot in "The Expedition" - the penultimate race of the racing series - he is still

remorse about missing the Xstream race in his hometown.

"It was tough because I really wanted to do the 24-hour course," Freeburn said. "I really enjoy doing all the different sports. I don't like just training for kayak; that's all I did for 10 years. I raced on various different squads on the national team from '88 to '93 and raced in Europe and World Cups.

"I really like doing the variety of sports. It's just kind of a lifestyle thing for me. I like to run, I like to bike, I like to kayak, I like to in-line skate. I know if I have a race coming up, it motivates me to get out there and push myself in the various sports that I really enjoy."

Durango's Xstream race will feature a combination of the mountain biking, kayak, trek, Tyrolean traverse and the staple of all AdventureXstream racing - navigation.

"There's three main events that you'll find at any race: Mountain Biking, trail running



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and kayaking, and with each course there's navigation involved," race organizer Will Newcomer explained. "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."

Adventure racing has been around for years, but the sport is relatively new to the States.

"Adventure racing really started in New Zealand many, many years ago," Newcomer said. "The Eco-Challenge, back in '95, I believe, was the first race that introduced the sport to the masses and the States. This is our fourth year. We started with three events in our first year and now we produce five events and adventure racing camps, so we've grown each year."

Newcomer and his Durango-based company, Gravity Play Sports, sold out the race in Moab with 300 participants. Today's race is also a sell-out, but with 150 competitors entered.



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