



## Nike/Beaver Creek defends Xstream title

Ballengee wins 24-hour solo race after nearly quitting the sport entirely

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FRISCO - Had it really been three weeks? Had 21 days honestly passed since the torture scorcher that was Primal Quest Utah?

Based on the way their bodies reacted during Saturday's Adventure Xstream 24-hour competition, many of the area's elite adventure racers had a tough time believing it. Sure, they finished the 100-mile course much, much faster than any average dudes could. And yes, they have trained themselves to bounce back from pain day after day after day.

Even so, as they lay on the grass next to the Frisco Nordic Center on Saturday afternoon, whopped was about the only word that fit.

"I think PQ's still in the legs a bit," said Vail's Mike Kloser, who captained his Nike/PowerBlast team to victory in the Utah desert the last week in June. "Even though it's been three weeks, I haven't had a chance to run much. I've been biking a little bit, been trying to recover, but I've been working a lot, trying to sleep - even my sleep quantities haven't been great."

Despite those struggles, Kloser led his all-Eagle County squad, Nike/Beaver Creek, to victory by 20 minutes over surprise second-place finisher Bagel Works. He joined Dan Weiland, Sari Anderson and Jay Henry as the squad defended its crown of last year, when a freaky-strong mountain storm shortened the race.

Bagel Works did not let the title defense come easily, however. The eventual runners-up got a boost from Jon Brown, the captain of Salomon/Crested Butte (Primal Quest's fifth-place finisher), who agreed to race with Bagel Works because he didn't think his CB squad was going to compete.

Bagel and Nike spent much of the first 10 hours of the race together, trading places now and then, before Nike pulled away on the decisive mountain biking leg. The foursome's winning time was 15 hours, 13 minutes.

"We have a pretty solid biking team with Sari and Dan and Jay, so the technical stuff was to our advantage," said Kloser, a Mountain Biking Hall of Fame member. "Up, down, flats, didn't matter - it was gonna be something we were going to make some ground on."

Especially when, on the final stretch of the Colorado Trail portion - which included one murderous, 45-minute granny gear climb - Bagel Works hit a wall.

Team Nike/Beaver Creek rides toward the Frisco Nordic Center to claim their victory Saturday during the 24-hour Adventure Xstream Breckenridge race. Pictured on the all-Eagle County team are, from left, Jay Henry, Mike Kloser, Sari Anderson and Dan Weiland.



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