



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

Hot, Hot, Heat in Kimberley

*Calgary's Wild Rose wins Raid the North 36 hour
adventure race during record high temperatures*

Kimberley, BC – Dark, soot-filled plumes of smoke, touched with red and orange, soared thousands of feet high into the stratosphere before dispersing and intermingling into the clouds. Their source was hidden from view by the craggy limestone sentinels of the Rocky Mountains that line the Crownsnest Pass on the Transcanada Highway. However, all who had come that way in the last week or so knew that huge and intense wildfires raging out of control in the area were responsible for the spectacular cone of puffy, billowing ash.

With the temperature already approaching 32 degrees Celsius around Kimberley Alpine Resort, those fires added an extra hot, extra dry and extra smoke tinged flavor to the crisp, 'baker's oven' air as the fourth Raid the North 36 hour adventure race of the 2003 season took place in and amongst the azure lakes and craggy cliffs of the Kootenays wilderness immediately around the Kimberley town-site.

The start time, traditionally 12:00 midnight, was pushed back to 4:00am to accommodate a section of course that would see teams portage their bikes next to a stomach-churning drop. The race-course designer, Frontier Adventure Racing's Geoff Langford, opted for the change so that teams would hit the section in daylight - it was important to be able to see ones footing up there.

"I admit I hesitated with that section at first," said Langford, "we want to provide an experience for our racers, to make them feel on the edge without actually putting them out there. Having them hit that part of the course in daylight was the only safe way to do it, so we put the time back. So far no one has complained, and I've only heard great things about the course!"

Lined up for the start were 24 teams from Alberta, BC, and the United States - as mixed in their skill levels and adventure racing experience as they were in their places of origin. One of Canada's strongest teams, **Spirit**, based out of Vancouver, were considered the favorites to win the 150km wilderness based race, their experience and rep making them the team to mark. However, other strong teams such as Calgary's **Wild Rose**, and teams **Washington Adventure Racing**, **Eco-Spirit Typhoon**, **Expedition Canada** and **Fin Du Monde** had the ability, speed and track record to play usurper, especially considering the oppressive heat that racers would have to endure for the next two days – it really was anyone's Raid at the start line!

Also at the event was team **Diabetes Network**, made up of Calgarians **Chris Newman**, **Cam Laing**, **Pat Kelly** and Edmontonian **Kelly Matheson**. Three of the group's members had type-1 diabetes and were racing on behalf of the **Diabetes Network Alberta Foundation** to raise funds and awareness in



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support of diabetes in the province. The racers would compete while carrying a pager-sized, battery-operated device that delivered small doses of insulin around the clock. **Dr. Terry Groves**, president of the **Diabetes Network Alberta Foundation** said, "This is a tremendous undertaking for a team with members who have diabetes, it shows strength, bravery and demonstrates an attitude that says this team will not let diabetes control their lives." Hats off to the **Diabetes Network** team for raising money and awareness.

The heat made the management and distribution of water supplies an important factor for race organizers as the temperature rose with the sun. Dehydration and heatstroke, especially after many hours of intense effort, loomed ahead as a constant threat to racers as they cranked from the start line at **Meachan Creek** to the first transition area, where a rapid swap of bikes for boats was made, sending teams paddling out into the deep blue of **Kootenay Lake**. The first two teams through were **Spirit** and **Wild Rose**, both coming in at the same time, **8:58 am**, and leaving the TA only minutes apart. The two teams had raced neck and neck to this checkpoint and would continue to duel it out for the remainder of Raid the North Kimberley.

All teams had made it through to the paddling section by the cutoff time and continued on towards the monster mountain bike ride up **Crawford Creek Road**, through **Rose Pass** and back down the other side – a distance of just over 60km. The frigid portage through the **St. Mary River** at CP6 should've served to cool down some aching and barking sore feet during the long descent, finally transitioning off of bikes at CP7.

Spirit and **Wild Rose** led it at this point, coming through the seventh checkpoint about half an hour apart at **19:26** and **20:03** - but teams **XC.Com Racing**, **Helly Hansen**, **Sila – Going Commando**, **Pure and Flash Five Energy Foods** all booked it through the CP within the hour, before 21:00, chasing hard and keeping the leaders running scared.

It was at this point that the race saw some teams forced out, likely due to the intensely hot and dry conditions. Kamloops Firefighters - team **Backdraft** unfortunately had to pull out, as did **Crape Geomatics**, and team **Energetic**, getting some rest and water and, knowing some of these guys and girls, planning strategy and training for their next race.

As if waiting for other teams to crack, the first three withdrawals were met by a deluge of other teams pulling out. Some came out voluntarily and others, like team **Kal Rats** (and others!), raced right to the brink, just missing the cutoff at subsequent CP's and having to pack it in till next time.

Expedition Canada also missed seeing the finish line – not because they missed a cutoff and not because they ran out of steam. These guys gave up their race to help with a volunteer that injured his knee when a small snow-bridge gave way. **Expedition Canada** was on hand at this remote location to stay with the volunteer until race organizers could help him out. Thanks to them for their sacrifice and best of luck at Raid the North Extreme in three short weeks!

In all, 19 teams DNF'd for one reason or the other, including the **Diabetes Network** group, leaving teams **Wild Rose**, **Spirit**, **Washington Adventure Racing**, **Whitelight Adventurers**, **Sila-Going Commando**, and **Welfare** to push from CP9 towards the finish at Kimberley Alpine Resort.

Those six teams came through the traverse at CP9, after over 24 hours under the blazing sun, clipped into the ropes spanning the gorge far below and set off on the journey to the other side, all under the watchful lens of a CTV news cameraman, Mike Churner, who was on sight to take in the misery as racers hauled depleted, dehydrated, and exhausted bodies hand over hand to the far side, where they unclipped and moved off towards the tenth and final CP situated right at the top of the Kimberley ski hill.



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Wild Rose jogged through CP 10 all smiles, but still furtively checking over their shoulder and asking the staff there if they knew how far back the closest competitors **Spirit** were – as if they expected them to burst out of the bush and force a sprint to the finish line at any minute. But they didn't. **Spirit** was over an hour back, approaching the checkpoint at a run, competitors till the end, and only slowing down when it was reported to them that **Wild Rose** had already crossed the finish line at the bottom of the hill. **Washington Adventure Racing** came down the hill to claim third.

The final team through CP10 and down to the finish line in Kimberley was **Welfare**, crossing the tape at 4:46, in fifth place, after just over 36 hours of racing.

The sixth team? The hearts of many of the volunteer staff and race staff went out to the hungry bellies of team **Sila-Going Commando** as they got turned around just before CP10 and endured an extra 8 hours on course trying to communicate their whereabouts, exhausted and weak, through to a search group led by intrepid **Pete Cameron** of **Frontier Adventure Racing**. The four racers were eventually reunited with some late night pizzas and Cokes, chased down and provided by **Jenn**, our rather anxious (but not on the surface!) CP data compilation guru and wife of team **Sila** racer, **Scott Pennell**.

The awards banquet, or 'chow-down' more accurately, saw **Wild Rose** receive the first place prize – fresh, **Golden, Raid the North Championship** competitors bibs and team race entry to the September race in Mattawa, ON, as well as sweet AR prizing from Salomon that they will train in and wear with pride. For the gear that they didn't win, \$1000 was awarded so that they might track down the last couple things they need before heading out to do the 6 day Raid the North Extreme, on August 17th.

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Next up:

Raid the North Extreme – Atikokan August 17-22
Ontario (6 day expedition event)

Raid the Series Championship – Mattawa Sept. 19-21
Ontario (2.5 day format)

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Frontier Adventure Racing Inc.

Adventure racing is the fastest growing sport in the world, and Frontier Adventure Racing Inc. is leading that growth in Canada with its incredibly popular races and training programs. Now in its sixth year of operation, Frontier Adventure Racing has established an international reputation for solid logistics and challenging racecourses. These non-stop races, ranging in length from the 5-8 hour Salomon Adventure Challenge, the 36-hour Raid the North Series and the six-day Raid the North Extreme, require teams to trek, mountain bike, paddle and negotiate fixed ropes, while navigating an unmarked course through the wilderness. Likened to an expedition with a stopwatch, adventure racing requires teamwork, perseverance and strong navigation and wilderness survival skills.

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