

Orionhealth.com are crowned the Adventure Racing World Champions

By Southern Traverse Ltd

New Zealand adventure racing team Orionhealth.com were crowned the Adventure Racing World Champions in Brazil yesterday.

After a race through the three states in the north east of Brazil Orionhealth finished 1hr 20 mins ahead of the second place and defending world championship team Nike (USA)

The race started on a remote sand covered peninsula that was accessible by boat only and the 60 teams in the ARWC 2008 began the race of 450 kilometres with 15 kilometres of sand dune running.

This was followed by a all night 60km paddle to the town of Parnaiba before the race headed inland. A long 106km bike ride inland led to the first of the mountain trekking sections.

It was at this point that the USA team Nike, who had seemed to be in control of the race lost the lead. Team Captain Mike Kloser "We were well ahead on the first mountain trek," he said, "then Chris Forne led us up a steep gully and we lost the trail. I'd say we lost about 2 and half hours there, so then we were chasing Orion for the later part of the race."

Through the next stages of Mountain bike and trekking the two leading teams were chased hard by a closely following pack of teams. With not more than a hour separating the top five teams it was going to come down to who had managed the sleep strategy best. (teams had the opportunity to collect a bonus checkpoint and take 4hrs off their mandatory sleep requirement)

Until the final point of mandatory sleep options it was only mathematical calculations that put one team actually ahead of the other. But at Vicosa de Ceara with the sleep options expired it was Orionhealth.com who ran into town in the lead. All the calculations had put them with about 1hr 30mins lead but the were in no mood to test that. They made one of the fastest transitions ever in adventure racing - changing from a 12hr trek stage to mountain biking in just 8 mins and were well done the road and out of sight before the second place Nike appeared.

At this point it was Orionhealth's race to lose. Only three stages separated them from the coastal finish but this involved 68kms of mountain biking followed by 60kms of paddling down a virtually waterless river and 43 kms mtn bike to the coast. At this point the race was won - the practical finish, but still the teams had a sailing leg on traditional fishing boats and a trek along the sand dunes to the 'marketing finish' at the spectacular windsurfing town of Jericoacoara

When asked what the best thing about the race was ...as they happily gave dozens of TV interviews the Team Captain Wayne Oxenham Oxenham summed it up "Winning" was his answer. He added, "I think we ran an intelligent race and that was the difference. Others were going out too hard, but we took it a bit easier in the heat of the day and tried to move faster at night and it paid off."

He added "The best thing, apart from winning, was the Brazilian people. On one stage we met a man and asked for water, so he rode off to his house on his bike to get us some! Things like that were happening all the time."

Orionhealth.com have made it their mission over the last few years to win this World Championship and have steadily increased their experience and results. With a 8th in New Zealand, 5th in Sweden and 3rd at last years World Champs in Scotland.

Team members of Orionhealth.com are Wayne Oxenham captain)
Stuart Lynch, Brent Edwards and Anna Berthelsen

At the prize ceremony Captain Wayne Oxenham had the last word , "This was a race worthy of a World Championship. It tested all the disciplines, and our team work, strategy and survival. A great race!"

Next year the World Championship moves onto XPD Portugal.

For voice interview

http://www.maxyourmedia.com/radiosport/ARWC08_Oxenham.wma

Thanks to sleepmonsters.com and sportzhub.co.nz

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION and photos:

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