

NOC 8-Hour Adventure Race (more or less) February, 2001

We got there Friday around 4pm, Derek Kozlowski, Renee Johnson, (crew) Thomas DeMaria and Myself, and went through the rigors of gear check-in. The meeting at 8pm was nothing new, no details except where it starts, the Nantahala Commercial Launch. So we went to sleep after rearranging gear for a 3rd, 4th or 5th time to the sounds of torrential rain. I didn't sleep well and woke up at 4am to get started.

Had a quick breakfast and headed to the launch. One lesson we learned is that we need to be more organized at the start i.e. get there earlier to setup and have gear that is user friendly for quick setup. We got the maps at 6am and started our mapping process, which we are reorganizing for the 30hour race. We will only have 2 members plot the course and then when they are done, take 5 minutes to read directions and study map. We rushed off into the darkness. Oh yeah, we did have to give our bikes up at the gear check-in for an un-assisted bike transition, so we were carrying on top of mandatory gear, bike shoes, tools and water bottles that we'd otherwise leave w/ bikes. We couldn't leave anything on the bike. So the packs were heavy to start with. We started off following the Bartrum trail as it was opposite direction of the 20+ mile endurance race in Jan. Within a mile or so, we came to a stop as we and several other teams lost the trail. Mistake one for us that cost us over 30 minutes and a good bit of energy. Remember next time to use common sense that when on established trails that are blazed, if the blazes cease then go back to the last. We screwed around at this junction where the creek on the map followed the Bartrum trail and finally stormed off to the correct trail where we found a camera man filming our confusion. We started up a series of switchbacks for several miles, meeting some teams, passing some and others passing us. We knew it would be a long day so we settled into our own pace run/ jog the flats and down hills and hike the up hills. We got to CP1 and headed down an old fire road. The fire road opened up into a road the traversed the side of the mountains on a long ridge. We were able to make up some good time running these down hills. The trick for CP2 was to pay attention to the altimeter and be looking for an area where the land rose up on the left side to 4400 feet. Derek started noticing tracks going uphill and that the altimeter was reading around 4200 feet. So we bushwhacked up the mtn. And found a trail that followed the forest boundary. After following this for a couple hundred yards, we found the orienteering flag. At that point we made the decision to cut some time off the roads and bushwhack down the mtn. The opposite side to catch the road again. We followed the road again for a while and came to CP3, where we were treated to a gear check and the transition to mtn. Biking. We made the transition and were in good standing. The road to CP4 was all pavement and mostly downhill. We made our second navigation error looking for cp4. I'd seen the road when we passed it but because I had the idea that it was further down, we passed it. It wasn't till a mile later we figured out our mistake and had to turn around. We got the CP4 and headed off to CP 5 where we would encounter a daunting climb that would take us nearly 1.5 hours to finish. We were wasted on this section, Derek, a strong mountaineer and biker had been getting over a leg injury the last 2 months which included no running and light biking. The prior run had really taken its toll on his legs for this section. We had devised a towing system to help who ever needed it, I pulled Renee most of the way though she says there was slack in

the cord some of the time, I never noticed. We ran out of water at this point as it was in the 50's and sunny. We had to use our iodine tablets and fill up from a nearby stream. The 15 – 20 minutes that we biked and waited for the water to be treated went by slowly. I'd look down just waiting for the minutes to count down so I could sip some of that liquid gold. We ate at every stop which became more frequent toward the top as some of the climbs got tougher and every topout looked like the end. It finally came, we checked into CP5 and then sped down the other side. I was cold and had to go down sections with one hand with my other behind my back to warm up. We had gotten to the point at the top that we didn't want to stop to change out gear so we suffered a little on the downhill. At the bottom we came upon a familiar area, Appletree campground which was part of the Endurance Trail Run. We took a left on the road past the bridge and felt just how sore our asses were on the bumpy dirt road. We had a renewed energy as we knew the end was within sight. We'd been racing for about 7 hours. We followed the Nantahala river along some beautiful gorges and waterfalls and pulled into CP6 at the river launch and start of the race for the last transition to rafting before the finish. We met up with our support crew and made a quick change to paddling clothing for a fun section of rafting. We hit all the lines on the tricky sections, that weren't many but this was our 2nd time ever rafting so it was fun and a welcome relief for our legs. We passed 2 teams during this leg to finish in 17th of 29 teams in 9hours 52minutes of fun and pain. We learned some good lessons that we'll take to the 30 hour race in mid-March.