



From the Highveld to the Highlands

Late-May will embrace the annual Adventure Racing World Championship, hosted by Wilderness ARC in the Highlands of Scotland. Of the 60 entered teams, from 22 countries, one stands out; the South Africans of McCain Adventure Addicts. This four-person team of Graham Bird, Jeannette Walder, Philip Swanepoel and Sakkie Meyer will cover over 525-kilometers of rugged and varied terrain, ascending a cumulative 22,500-meters during the 6-days of non-stop racing.

There's little doubt that the Adventure Racing World Championship is the premier event on the 2007 international circuit. "All the top teams in the World are going and we are looking forward to competing against and learning from all of them," says team captain Graham Bird.

That said, McCain Adventure Addicts is a team packed with international race experience. Bird, Walder and Meyer raced together to place 13th (of 90 starting teams) at Primal Quest, an expedition event held in Utah in July 2006. Swanepoel brings to the team his experiences at New Zealand's Southern Traverse and Eco Challenge Fiji.

As a non-stop event, teams chose when to eat and sleep and rely on stamina, endurance, strategy and accurate navigation to successfully complete the course. This event follows an unsupported format. The team's gear and food boxes, bicycles and kayaks will be transported by race organisation from one transition to the next for the duration of the event. "Our experience at Primal Quest has helped us enormously. We had to get used to having a lot less equipment than at supported races," explains Bird.

This Championship course has been designed to challenge the fittest, toughest and most determined athletes. McCain Adventure Addicts can expect to scale the UK's highest and roughest mountains and ridges. They'll experience deep glens, cold lochs, wild remote moorland, forests and peninsulas, mystical islands and open sea crossings. And even though it is summer in the Northern Hemisphere, the weather is ever-changing and the occurrence of heavy rain, high winds, sleet and snow in the Scottish Highlands is likely.

In describing this year's route, course designer Gary Tompsett, says: "[This championship course] will

contain more unique, truly dramatic and strenuous challenges than ever before. It takes competitors into the heart of sensational and sometimes unexpected territory of Scotland – Europe’s Adventure Capital. It’s a monster of a route.”

Adventure racing is a multidiscipline sport and as such this Championship event includes trail running/ trekking (mostly mountainous terrain), mountain biking, kayaking, swimming (in open water and canyons) and technical rope work.

McCain Adventure Addicts are a team of exceptional paddlers. “At international level South African teams are very strong in the discipline of paddling,” says Swanepoel. “We’re above average - especially Sakkie, Jeannette and Graham - and this will definitely suit us as this race provides for a lot of time on the water with sections on sea, lakes and rivers.”

The team’s pre-race preparations have progressed swiftly. “We’re fortunate to have McCain behind us as sponsors,” says Bird. “We have been able to focus more on training and preparing rather than worrying about the financial implications of competing overseas. The McCain brand and products are well-suited to this outdoor, adventure sport as they support and endorse a healthy, active and balanced lifestyle.”

McCain Adventure Addicts fly to the UK on Saturday, 19 May 2007. The race starts on Saturday, 26 May 2007 from Fort William and can be followed online at www.sleepmonsters.com.

For more information on the Adventure Racing World Championships, please visit www.arwc2007.com. For information on the sport of adventure racing in South Africa, please visit www.ar.co.za

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For McCain Adventure Addicts

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