

Local Adventure Racing Enthusiasts Navigate their Way to Primal Quest 2008

By Michael Spiller



Team Enduring Freedom is (left to right): Michael Spiller, Christine Bone, Scott Olson and Patrick Henry. Photo by Dan Hicok

You may be asking yourself, “Why is there an article about adventure racing in my favorite local triathlon magazine?” Well, because Team Enduring Freedom has some exciting news to share.

First, let’s cover the basics. What is adventure racing? If you are unfamiliar with the sport, it is a multi-disciplined race that usually involves any combination of orienteering and navigation, cross-country running, mountain biking, paddling, climbing, and yes, sometimes swimming. However, swimming in adventure racing usually means with your clothes and shoes on and in temperatures that are less than 65 degrees. Adventure racing is enjoying a recent surge in popularity and is slowly becoming nationally known. It generally attracts physically active people from their early twenties through their mid-fifties.

Second, what in the world is “Team Enduring Freedom?” It is a co-ed team comprised of four local adventure racing athletes willing to com-

pete in the grueling ten-day adventure called “Primal Quest.” Enduring Freedom has solidified itself as a force on the adventure racing circuit. Members of Enduring Freedom have placed in about 80 percent of the races in which they have participated, success that has generated some national and local recognition.

Lastly, what in the world is “Primal Quest?” It’s usually referred to as the “Ironman race of adventure racing,” or the world’s most challenging adventure race. It takes place in June of 2008 and is an environmentally friendly, ecologically aware wilderness Expedition Adventure Race[®]. Teams of experienced cross-country adventure athletes journey across expansive terrain using only a map, a compass, and their combined skills. They will travel over 300 miles to complete the grueling ten day race.

Hundreds of teams submit applications for the race, but few get selected. I am a member of Team Enduring Freedom, and we never dreamed of being selected as a team for Primal Quest. We’ve come a long way since our first adventure race four years ago, but we’ve got a long way to go in order to prepare for up to ten days in the wilderness.

Training for the race will consist of a variety of endurance sessions, including paddling, mountain biking, rock climbing, running, night navigation, and white-water swimming. It will also mean receiving five or more different certifications in order to compete. A majority of the training sessions for Enduring Freedom will be 12-36 hours in length. This will help to prepare the team to work as best as we can with very little sleep or rest. We’ve scoped out several multi-day races beginning in January 2008, just for training purposes.

Enduring Freedom has the support of Underarmour (UA) as our clothing gear sponsor. UA is providing us with clothing necessary for all climates. “Without their support, we may not be able to accomplish this goal,” stated Christine Bone, a 1st Lieutenant (she’s an active duty Intelligence Officer assigned to Special Operations) and member of the Enduring Freedom team. “The entry fee alone is \$14,500, so you need assistance from many different partners.”

Enduring Freedom’s team members consist of Michael Spiller, Captain, Scott Olson, Co-Captain, Patrick Henry, and Christine Bone.

Please visit www.teamenduringfreedom.com to find out more about team Enduring Freedom and www.ecoprimalquest.com/wp-primal/ to find out more about Primal Quest.

Michael Spiller is a seasoned adventure racer and Founder of NV Racing, LLC. NV Racing is an adventure racing/triathlon training club based in Northern Virginia. NV Racing has steadily grown into the premiere adventure racing club in the area. The goal of NV Racing is to introduce and promote the sport of adventure racing and triathlons to the Greater D.C. Metropolitan Area, while helping to ease the costs associated in participating in adventure races along the east coast. NV Racing’s current sponsors include: Under Armour, Hammer Nutrition, Superior Paving, IIF Data, Conrod Associates, Riptide Swim and Tri, Potomac River Running, Haymarket Bikes, and Spectrum Communications. For more information, please visit www.nvracing.org. ★