

Houston Captures First Place Title in the 3rd Annual Four Winds '99 USA Supreme Adventure Race/Wyoming



The longest running and only 8 day expedition level Adventure Race in the US

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Aug 25, 1999

This year's race was dedicated to the memory of Krista Griesacker and Dave Malinowski. The Ute ceremonial staff commemorating the Spirit Award was carried in their honor by Team Dawg and Team Houston.

Pinedale, Wyoming — Slipping in just before midnight on August 20, Team Houston finished the final mountain biking leg on their way to victory, capturing the Four Winds '99 - USA Supreme Adventure Race/Wyoming overall championship title. In addition they won the premier four-person, coed category.

Team Captain Keith Winzenried (Houston TX) led Troy Burt (Cincinnati OH), Emily Johnston (Driggs ID), and Bob Talamini (Houston TX), to the winners circle after completing the approximately 340+ mile course that kicked off Saturday August 14.

Anchorage Alaska-based Team Burnin' Daylight - Jeff Banish, Pat Munz - placed second overall and won the two-person, coed category.

Tying for third place honors overall were Teams Orion and Pinnacle. As a four-person, same gender team, California based Orion, comprised of Team Leader Michael Johnson (Larkspur CA), Craig Brinton (San Francisco CA), Joel Geran (Pt. Mugu CA), and Marc Igel (Bolinas CA), also won their class, adding the points won from that category to their season accumulation towards the Mountain Rage Championship Title that ends with the November Four Winds Mountain Rage Lake Powell Race. And Team Pinnacle - Elizabeth Carabarin (San Jose CA), Michael Reinhart (Hanford CA), Mike Snow (Kirkland WA) and Janet Stadshaug (Kirkland WA), placed second behind Houston in the four person, coed category. Team Dawg won the fastest time across all water sections and Team Knuckleheads won the KHS sponsored, fastest mountain biking sections on the course as well as posting the fastest unranked time on the course overall.

Throughout the competition, which officially ended August 21, racers faced one of the most daunting Four Winds courses to date, with true orienteering on every leg of the race under black moonless nights, contrasting to sunny, beautiful and hot alpine days, gaining a stunning wilderness experience over the 8 days of the race. Teams faced flat and moving water in paddling venues, and in the moving water section traveled over 75 miles day and night through up to class 3 water, coping with temperature shifts from 85 degrees in daylight to 24 degrees at night. Two different mountain peaks were scaled in both the Wyoming and Salt River Ranges. The first peak to climb, Wyoming Peak, rises from Middle Piney Lake at 8600 feet, and challenged racers to hit a checkpoint at 11378 feet. Later racers faced into the craggy mountains of the Salt River Range and performed a major climb from just under 7400 to the top of Virginia Peak, at 10,141 feet. Racers enjoyed spectacular views from this peaktop, one of the most austere and magnificent mountain peaks in the region. Soon after, racers would face another climb on the way to the horseback leg, up White Creek at 7600 feet to the top of the ropes section at over 8400 feet, allowing for a dramatic rappel. The race officially ended on the eighth day, August 21, at the beautiful Lakeside Lodge Resort and Marina above Pinedale on Fremont Lake, where the race had started on August 14. Teams successfully faced a course that challenged navigation, paddling, horseback, mountain biking and mountaineering skills, in weather conditions that were optimal.

Approximate mileage:

- Kayaking - 24 miles on Fremont Lake
- Mountain Biking - 70 miles from Lakeside Lodge through the foothills of the Winds River Range in the Bridger Teton National Forest to near the headwaters of the Green River
- Kayaking - on the Green River for over 75 miles through the Green River Valley to just south of Big Piney
- Mountain Biking - 32 miles into the Wyoming Range to Middle Piney Lake
- Trekking/Climbing - continuing throughout the Wyoming Range, beginning with a climb to summit Wyoming Peak before heading west to the Salt River Range for another summit up Virginia Peak. This 66 mile leg was capped with a 500+ foot rappel at White Creek
- Mountain Biking - a short 6 mile ride to Stump Lake and the horse outfitters camp
- Horseback ride/run - 15 miles climbing back up Hot Foot Creek into the Middle Ridge of the Wyoming Range

- Trekking - through the Wyoming Range and out the sagebrush foothills of the Green River Valley for 13 miles to North Horse Creek
- Mountain Biking - heading out of Bridger Teton National Forest for a 33 mile fast ride through Daniel Junction and back to Lakeside Lodge Resort above Pinedale for the finish.

The often rugged and unforgiving terrain challenged the teams' navigational skills and patience, as the course bore out what the organizers had outlined during the pre-race briefing: that the teams would have the opportunity to select their own routes through a system of existing roads and trails, many difficult to find. The real navigational challenge would occur when the roads and trails disappeared in the overgrowth of some twenty years of little use. Time after time, as teams arrived at transition areas throughout the eight-day competition, Four Winds staffers would hear tales about the trails 'disappearing,' and the difficult decisions made on black moonless nights to bivouac instead of carving circles in the mountains till dawn.

The longest running expedition level race in North America, the multi-sport Four Winds event is designed to provide athletes worldwide the opportunity to experience the ultimate in physical, mental and personal challenge and growth. In addition, the spirit of participation and achievement is celebrated through the race's emphasis on more teams reaching the finish line. This has been accomplished with the company's first expedition-level races - Four Winds '97: Durango to Taos, and Four Winds '98: Montana, and the '98/99 Spring and Fall short-course Mountain Rage Series races (Lake Roosevelt, AZ; Lake Powell, AZ & UT; and Lake Mead AZ & NV). The '99 USA Supreme Adventure Race was the 7th major multi-day, multi sport adventure race produced by Four Winds.

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