

Historic Win for the Mountain Designs Wild Women Team at Legend Adventure Race in Australia

The win was the first time in the history of the sport that an all women's team has won a major international expedition adventure race.

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA, March 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When the Mountain Designs Wild Women team arrived at the finish line of the Legend Expedition Race at Apollo Bay on the Great Ocean Road in Australia it was a historic moment in the history of Adventure Racing. Their win was the first time in the history of the sport that an all women's team has won a major international expedition adventure race.



Team Mountain Designs Wild Women on the finish line at Legend XPD

The Legend race was the first Adventure Racing World Series Qualifier of the year and in the 23 years the global series has been running no women's team has won an ARWS race, or any other major international race, such as Eco-Challenge or the Raid World Cup. Since the Raid Gauloises in 1989 in New Zealand, recognised as the first adventure race, the sport has prioritised mixed gender teams, there have been only a few competitive women's teams and none has secured a win in the toughest of endurance sports, until now.

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Alina McMaster

The Legend Race was a 450km non-stop race, with the course open for 6 days, including 13 endurance stages of

mountain and coastal trekking, mountain biking, ocean, river and lake kayaking. Teams had to stay together at all times and collect all of the checkpoints on the route, navigating by map and

compass, and only taking a few hours sleep during the whole race.

The Mountain Designs Wild Women team crossed the finish line after 73 hours and 9 minutes of racing led by team captain Kim Beckinsale. She was racing with Alina McMaster, Cass Kimlin and Del Lloyd and the team has a combined age of 197 years and between them, 78 years of adventure racing experience!

The Wild Women had a difficult start to the race when McMaster and Beckinsale were ill and the team had to rest for an hour, but after this they had an intense competition with 'Team MMI-The Band', swapping the lead almost stage by stage. The penultimate stage was to prove decisive when there was an unexpected change to the course.

This was a kayak stage in an estuarine river and lake system, with teams collecting 4 checkpoints in the order of their choosing. However, what was planned as a paddling stage turned into an epic mud-wade when an excavator dredged the mouth of the Aire River just before the teams arrived! Water levels fell and in the adjoining Lake Costin and Lake Craven there was almost no water, only a lake of mud teams would have to cross to reach two checkpoints!

Over 4 hours the Mountain Designs Wild Women team succeeded in reaching all checkpoints, but Team MMI-The Band failed to reach two, becoming stranded in the mud and losing shoes in the process. They turned back and the race was effectively decided as, although they crossed the line first, they were penalised 4 hours for missing the checkpoints.

Beckinsale said, "We were expecting a beautiful estuarine paddle before it got dark, then ran out of water and ran into stinking mud flats. We were above our knees in mud and reeds were over our heads, but we were determined to keep moving. Kim smashed through the reeds and Cas



Team Mountain Designs Wild Women on the final coastal trek at Legend XPD



Team Mountain Designs Wild Women win Legend XPD in Australia

urged us to keep paddling.

"They were bold and tenacious and we had the experience to know you just have to keep on going, no matter how slowly. We paddled and pushed and levered ourselves out of the mud, and were so glad we took the kayak straps! We thought no one else would do it and I took photos to show we were at the checkpoints and had been there with the kayaks."

Lloyd added, "We were fast, smart and used all our skills and experience, supported each other, carried each other's gear and our navigation was accurate. We have masses of experience and heaps of bloody-mindedness, which meant we were damn well going to get through that mud, but we were strong for the whole race and worked hard for each other and for the win."

McMaster raced at international events from the early days of adventure racing in the 1990's and returned to the sport after a break for childcare. "I love expedition races," she said, "they are hands-down the best kind of racing. They are always an amazing experience. You are on a journey, out in the bush with your mates and with no tech do distract you. It's the sport and the community which makes you want to do it.

"For these races you need a team with no ego, and bucket loads of humility, who have a shared goal, that is put ahead of everyone else's needs to look good. You have to give your whole self to the team, put everyone's energy into one bucket and share it out. That team work is really special and keeps me coming back."

Kimlin only joined the team for this race 6 weeks ago and said, "There's a strong bond in the team and you see everyone at their best and worst. With adventure racing it's important you don't let the "I can't" mentality in or be afraid to give it a try just because it's hard."



Team Mountain Designs Wild Women celebrate a historic win at Legend XPD



Team Mountain Designs Wild Women

Beckinsale, who organises a women's only race with her company Tri-Adventure, added, "We want other women to have the opportunity to do this sport and change lives, to know they are more amazing than they thought they could be! It's a sport where you can sign-up and have a go."

There was a strong women's representation in the race, in which all of the starting teams reached the finish line. The final team over the line was another all-female team, the Vortex Divas, who reached the finish after 120 hours of racing, and the highest ranked mixed gender team were Team Blunder Bus, comprised of 2 men and 2 women.

This team were delighted to win the prize of a place at the Adventure Racing World Championship, which will be staged by the Huairasinchi race in Ecuador in November and the prizes were presented by ARWS CEO, Heidi Muller, who was a surprise visitor to Apollo Bay for the finish of the race.

The Blunder Bus team of Rowan Brookes, Lisa Dominguez, Steve Owens and Simon Vandestaedt finished the course in just over 98 hours and for Domingues and Brookes it was their first expedition race. Dominguez said, "The Great Ocean Road region really showcased what expedition racing can offer and there was a strong sense of community during and after the race, when we heard the stories of other racers. We went into the race with the goals of completing it as a team and experiencing the beauty of the course, so the opportunity to race in Ecuador is an unexpected bonus!"

Beckinsale voiced the same feelings about the second Legend course; "Thanks to Chris Dixon and his team from Wild&Co for once again piecing together a spectacular but extremely challenging course for us crazy Wild Women to test ourselves on. The course had everything; ocean paddling, awesome mountain bike trails, stunning views and so much more!"

Dixon said, "The Great Ocean Road has been a fantastic location and so were the Snowy Mountains last year. The vision for Legend XPD is to take the race to the most iconic locations in every state and we can't wait to take the race to Tasmania next year for the next chapter of the Legend!"

Heidi Muller added, "It's such an exciting prospect for The Legend to take the Adventure Racing World Series back to Tasmania in 2025. The Adventure Racing World Championship was held there in 2011 and was an incredibly successful race with 90 teams taking part. Tasmania is a perfect location for the next Legend."

For more information about the Legend XPD race visit <https://www.legendexpd.com.au/>
You can see the full programme of Wldnco races at <https://www.wldnco.com/>

About the Adventure Racing World Series

The Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) is a global platform uniting professional adventure races in iconic locations to serve a worldwide community of adventurers and endurance athletes. The series included 64 events in 2023.

A different race hosts the AR World Championship each year and the series consists of Qualifier, Regional and Stage races. Qualifiers are non-stop expedition length races of 3-10 days for mixed gender teams of 4, and race winners receive a place in the World Championship.

Regional races in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania are in the 12-36 hour range and offer the opportunity of accessible, weekend racing and a pathway towards expedition racing and competing in ARWS Qualifiers and World Championships. Stage races are new for 2023 and are multiday day events with overnight camps.

Teams competing in Qualifiers are listed in the ARWS World Rankings and each region also has its own ranking.

The ARWS CEO is South African Businesswoman Heidi Muller, who is also Race Director of Expedition Africa. The Adventure World Series was established in 2001 and is a company registered in Bentonville, Arkansas, USA.

More information is on the ARWS website; www.arworldseries.com

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