

Thunderbolt AR Win 2024 X-Marathon, the Oceania Championship in the Adventure Racing World Series

Hosted around the beautiful yet treacherous terrains of Lake Macquarie, the event brought together some of the toughest adventure racers from across the region.

LAKE MACQUARIE CITY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA, September 3, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The X-Marathon adventure race, the official Oceania Championship of the Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS), pushed teams to their limits in a challenging and mentally demanding course.



Team Thunderbolt AR - ARWS Oceania Champions

Thunderbolt Adventure Racing (AR) emerged victorious in the Full course, demonstrating exceptional navigation, endurance, and strategy. Team captain Hugh Stodart reflected on the challenge ahead just before the race, stating, “So many decisions to make—choosing the right checkpoints, finding the best routes. Some are far from obvious, and we’ve got a lot of planning to do. I thought we’d get some sleep, but now, I’m not so sure.”

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Maria Plyashechko, Race Director

Stodart’s words proved prophetic as the race unfolded into what many participants described as a “thinker’s race.” Teams needed to master the art of navigation and strategy to maximize their performance within the 26-hour cutoff time. The event presented a tough yet achievable course with multiple bonus checkpoints that offered teams the

option to skip if necessary, testing not just their physical endurance but their mental fortitude as well.

Throughout the event, competitors faced numerous challenges, from navigating the darkness of

Lake Macquarie's suburbs to wrestling with the tangled woods of Lantana and getting lost in the maze of trails. Despite these hardships, teams were united by an incredible sense of accomplishment as they crossed the finish line, where they celebrated with medals, pizza, and cold beer, sharing their stories of struggle and triumph.

This year's X-Marathon saw the strongest lineup since 2014, reminiscent of when Avaya competed in Geocentric's Geoquest. The race lived up to its reputation, with gruelling terrain, intricate maps, endless navigational choices, and seamless logistics.

In addition to the Full course, the event also featured a Half course and a Mini-course for those looking to experience the thrill of adventure racing at different levels. Tiger Adventure Racing Maniacs dominated the Half course, led by Monika and Andrew, while The Watties secured victory in the Mini-course, paddling to the remote Wolstencroft Peninsula, trekking from their kayaks, and cycling through the single-track maze of Sunshine Peninsula.

The race weekend kicked off with a warm welcome at the South Lake Macquarie Amateur Sailing Club on Friday night. Teams were eager to tackle the course, and the atmosphere was charged with excitement as racers reunited with friends and posed for team photos.

Saturday morning, the race began with a high-speed kayaking leg across Lake Macquarie to Pulbah Island. Thunderbolt AR took the lead early in the race and maintained their advantage despite a fierce challenge from Alpine Avengers, ultimately securing their Oceania Champions title.

One of the standout moments of the event came not from athletic prowess but from a



Racing on the shore of Lake MacQuarie at X-Marathon 2024



X-Marathon 2024 started with a mass kayak as teams set off across Lake Macquarie

remarkable act of resourcefulness. An 82-year-old local farmer, Barry Webster, became an unlikely hero when he helped Wildflow Tiger Adventure Racing repair a broken bike frame during a critical section of the course. Thanks to Barry's ingenuity, the team was able to finish the race and place an impressive fourth overall, demonstrating the true spirit of adventure racing—teamwork, resourcefulness, and perseverance.

As the X-Marathon drew to a close, one thing was clear: this was more than just a race. It was a journey of pushing boundaries, navigating unforgiving terrain, and discovering inner resilience. Adventure racing strips away the superficial, revealing the true strength of the human spirit. Every struggle and victory etched itself into the hearts of the competitors, reminding them that they are stronger than they ever imagined.

The event was supported by Lake Macquarie City Council and would not have been possible without their support.

For more information and full race results, visit <https://xmarathon.com.au/>

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 includes 80 events in 2024.

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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