2026 Adventure Racing World Championship Underway in Corsica

Ninety-Eight teams representing 30 nations set off from Corte, marking the start of the Adventure Racing World Championship 2026; Corsica is Magic



Packrafting on day one at the Adventure Racing World Championship



The stage 2 cycle at the Adventure Racing World Championship

BENTONVILLE, AR, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- CORTE, CORSICA — 1 October 2026 — At 06:00 AM this morning 98 teams representing 30 nations officially set off from Cours Pascal Paoli in Corte, marking the start of the Adventure Racing World Championship 2026; ARWC 2026 - Corsica is Magic.

The early morning race start followed Wednesday's prologue event through the historic Citadel of Corte, which offered a spectacular sporting spectacle as teams were joined by local school children to find checkpoints referencing Corsican culture and history.

This morning teams arrived at Place Tuffelli from 4am to start the Championship, collecting their satellite trackers and sealing the emergency phones they carry. Ahead of them lay a non-stop 500 km expedition in total autonomy, navigating strictly with map and compass without GPS devices, on a route consisting of trekking, mountain biking, packrafting, sea kayaking, canyoning, and rope sections across Corsica.

Teams race in total autonomy, and with respect for nature and the environment, staying together at all times. If one racer drops out, or they unseal their phone to call for support, the team is out of the race. The race clock does not stop and teams travel day and night.



The start of Adventure Racing World Championship in Corte, Corsica



Packrafting - when there is not river water

After the high energy start, the opening stage plunged competitors directly into the island's river network with a 1.5 km trek along the bed of the Tavignano river, passing the Passerelle de la Confluence with the Restonica river to reach Transition Area 1 (TA1) at Chemin du Fussadu. It was only when they arrived here that they received the maps for the first 6 stages of the race and discovered the full detail of the challenging route they face.

As the sun rose at TA1, teams transitioned to Section B, a 42 km mountain bike leg ascending 1,100 metres toward TA2, set up at the Ernella moto-cross track. The route followed an old roman road to the hilltop village of Santa Lucia di Murcurio, a very picturesque setting, and at times the gradients were steep, forcing teams to push. At checkpoint 1 they passed the Sant'Antone chapel before crossing the Piedicorte di Gaggio, and the final descent was a fast and exhilarating singletrack section.

Teams commented the ride was varied and challenging, with more single track riding than many races, fantastic mountain vistas, and more bike pushing too!

Christophe Aubonnet, a veteran racer who has competed many expedition races designed by Race Director Pascal Bahuaud commented; “We had to wake up early! It was a ride with some choices so you had to stay connected to the map, and some tough stages. It's what we expect from this race - it's why we come.”

Some teams had misfortune, or made mistakes, in this early stage. A Dutch team destroyed a bike wheel and the only New Zealand team in the race suffered a broken suspension on the bike

of Jo Williams, a two time world champion. World ranked #3 team, Kailas Fuja from Brazil and Thailand took the wrong route and the navigational error cost them several hours and put them with the back teams. It was a mistake that will be hard to bounce back from for one of the race favourites. Other riders took falls and arrived at TA2 with scratches and shaken, but undaunted.

None of these teams will give up, adventure racing is about overcoming challenges; bikes will be repaired somehow, pain pushed through, and mistakes forgotten to focus on the task ahead.

The challenges come from the environment too of course, and this was the case on stage C, a 30km packrafting descent of the Tavignano river through narrow gorges, usually foaming with white-water rapids. After a dry summer the water is now exceptionally low and teams were alternating short stages of paddling on still water in the canyons, and carrying their rafts across the rocky riverbed.

The leading teams on this first day of the race are dominated by French squads who are in the leading 9 places heading towards Transition 3. With the front teams is the world #1 team and 2024 World Champions '400team Altore', who are the hot favourites to take another title.

By nightfall on day one the fastest teams will start Section D, a 36km coastal sea kayaking section from Aléria to TA4 at Solenzara. The stage begins by leaving the river system and crossing the wild mouth of the Tavignano River as it enters the Tyrrhenian Sea. Competitors then paddle southward , passing Checkpoint 2 (CP2) at Migliacciaru Beach before arriving at the Solenzara riverbank early on day 2.

The race can be followed through extensive, live social media coverage and continuous satellite tracking of all of the teams. The winners are anticipated to reach the finish line on the beach at L'Île-Rousse starting 6 October, and there are hard days of endurance, discovery and adventure ahead for all of the teams as they discover that 'Corsica is Magic'.

Race Information & Media Resources:
Live GPS Tracking & Updates: www.arwc2026.com
Official Hashtags: #ARWC2026 #CorsicaIsMagic

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