



RAID THE NORTH – TREMBLANT RACE SYNOPSIS JUNE 1-2, 2002

Day One

It seemed as though the weather would not be in favor of the 41 teams from across Canada and the US who are participating in this year's Raid the North - Tremblant race. Only minutes before the start, the sky had been lit up with a spectacular thunder and lightning storm culminating two days of rain that threatened a water-logged start. Under surprisingly clear skies, the 164 racers took off at midnight running up a slight grade at the beginning of their 150 km, 36-hour challenge.

The first leg was an exercise in bushwhacking through original and repopulated forests. Set in a course area on the farthest borders of Quebec's cottage country, this ten kilometer trek through what was now wet and untamed country was quickly subverted by the top two teams. Instead of taking their chances with the shorter (but rougher) trail through the woods, *E.S.C.A.P.E. Aventure* and *La Maudite Equipe*, both of Quebec, decided to run a 25-km route along an abandoned logging road straight to CP1. Although this method may have saved them valuable time, some have questioned whether this was the best strategy. In a similar situation at Raid the North - Tremblant 2001, a team who chose the clean, dry sprint instead of the bushwhacking ended up paying for their expense of energy later in the race.

By 7:00, 30 teams had made it past CP 1 and onto CP 2, only a few kilometers away and the start of a 70 km bike leg through the rolling hills of the Laurentian mountains. The day dawned sunny and clear so for the majority of teams, this long and almost leisurely ride over hard-packed surfaces makes up for a night spent cold and wet orienteering through the forest. By the end of the first discipline, the spread between first and last place has reached seven hours, but all teams are in excellent spirits.

Most teams make it through to the end of the bike leg without incident and with reason. Although including some slight grades and a few unpredictable washouts, this bike section had few cars on it, the roads are mostly passable (despite the two days of rain) and the day is sunny and about consistently 24 degrees. Last year's winner, *Continuum*, have made up an hour during the bike section and take the lead. Two teams are out of competition: *Afrayed Knot II* and *Dirt Bags* are the first to withdraw, the latter due to an injury. They choose to continue with three members unranked.

The wind has picked up by the time the first teams reach the canoe put-in point, just north of the appropriately named L'Ascencion. At the second transition area, teams transfer from the bikes, leaving up to a bag per team with their support crews, and by early afternoon, *Continuum* still leads *E.S.C.A.P.E. Aventure* onto the water. All teams have to check out of CP 6, the start of the canoe leg, by 17:30, since a small white water section makes canoeing at night too dangerous to be entertained by even the most foolhardy of adventure race teams.

Seven teams did not make the cut-off and missed the 30 km paddle along the Rouge River, well-known as one of the country's best kayaking and white water rafting centers. This section of the river is suited for even the less experienced paddlers, but includes at least one portage. The others push ahead, since they must be off the water before dark. The teams who missed the checkpoint by 17:30 are moved directly to CP 10 for another 22 km of uninterrupted biking, this time through a more populated area.

By 15:00, *Continuum* is still holding strong in first place, one hour ahead of *Lowe Alpine/Montrail* who has moved into second, followed by *Star Choice* and *Raging Chaos* close behind, using the current to their advantage. The lead teams all have experienced paddlers and by the start of the second bike leg, all seem in top shape and ready for the next section, none taking very long to linger at TA 3.

Meanwhile, for the teams who didn't get their chance on the river, it's back to the bicycles through the countryside past L'Annonciation. The top teams, who left hours earlier, have shifted positions slightly with *Continuum* leading the way at 16:23 followed by *Lowe Alpine/Montail*, *ECOaventures*, *Human Factor* and *Raging Chaos* on their heels. As the day lengthens, the leaders will be faced with the decision of taking the advanced section route - a very challenging trek that will lead them to the dramatic 70 m+ rappel. If these teams complete this advanced section they will automatically rank higher than the teams that complete the regular route.

By 21:38, *Continuum* has made it into CP 12 for the start of the third bike leg which most teams will be making in the dark. This bike section is a classic element to Tremblant races, heading up the northwest side of the mountain and over the top to the ski trail descent on the south side. Little navigation is needed for this segment but a strong set of lungs and sturdy legs are practically mandatory equipment.

By 22:00, *Om Mani* and *Ascent Phase* have dropped out, and *Rookies*, who have consistently been the last team throughout this race, have not been seen since CP 3 and a search and rescue crew is on their way. It's anyone's guess how many of the remaining 36 teams will still be in contention by morning light.

Day Two

Despite forecasts for a mild night, temperatures went down and the winds picked up making it bitterly cold for the 32 teams of 41 left on the Raid the North - Tremblant course. As the sun went down most teams were still paddling down the Rouge River to CP10/TA3. Here they got on their bikes once again for a quick 22 km ride through a maze of paved roads. Only 26 teams were able to make it through this section to CP11. The introduction of a midnight start and cold conditions were taking its toll on the teams.

However, lead teams [Continuum](#) and [Lowe Alpine/Montrail](#) were able to make it to CP 13 before the 2:00 a.m. advanced course cut-off time. Both teams choose to tackle this addition to the racecourse which consisted of a fairly short, yet technically challenging trek. Teams who complete this advanced section automatically rank higher than any teams that complete the regular course. Team #1 arrived at CP15 the start of the 200+ foot rappel almost two hours ahead of Team #4. Tremblant. After descending this spectacular drop set on the north side of Mont-Tremblant, teams then headed out on bikes to the finish line at the base of the mountain.

Just one minute before 8:00 a.m. this morning, [ECOaventures](#) (Val-Belair, QC) who completed the regular course, crossed the finish line taking second place. They were followed by race leader [Continuum](#) (Montreal, QC), who crossed the finish line at 8:26 a.m. making them the official winners of the race. This is the second time that Team Continuum has won this race - taking first place in last year's Tremblant event.

[Human Factor](#), from Brooklin, ON took third place, crossing the finish line at 9:05 a.m.

The race officially closed at noon this afternoon, but teams were allowed to continue on the course until 4:00 p.m. unranked. Twenty-two of the 41 teams crossed the finish line – 10 of which were officially ranked.

Check out www.RAIDTHENORTH.com for complete race results and pictures.