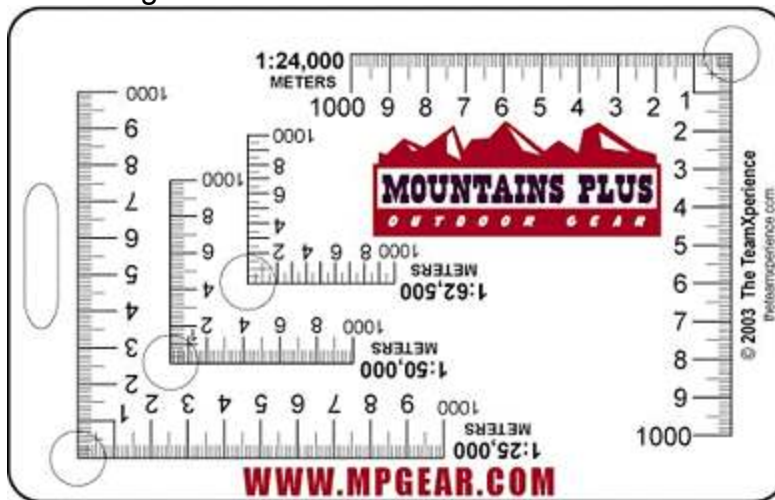


ADVENTURE RACING 101

- **Definition** – no strict definition. Finding checkpoints as fast as possible while navigating through forests, deserts, urban areas, water environments, mountains, valleys, and rain forests by way of multiple human-powered disciplines. The navigation component is what separates AR from other "marked route" competitions. Participants usually compete as teams of up to 4 people.
- **Disciplines** – some combination of mountain biking, paddling, trekking, navigation, orienteering and rope work. Other disciplines might include swimming and/or special team-building tests
- **Different types**
 - Sprints – 3-6 hours
 - Often no coordinate plotting and minimal navigation involved
 - Sort of like an off-road team triathlon
 - Adventure – 8-30 hours
 - Plotting and navigation become bigger part of the equation
 - Slower pace, more mental prep
 - The longer the race, the more mental ability becomes important
 - Expedition – 48 hours+
 - Years of experience are usually required to finish these races
 - Costly – can be thousands of dollars
- **Maps** – reading and plotting UTM coordinates, route choice, and avoiding prohibited routes.
 - USGS quad maps – 1:24,000 scale is common
 - Plotting tool



- Eastings and northings – “read right up”
- Tic marks and grid lines
 - Mark maps for a race (ie, highlight in yellow the proposed route, orange for mandatory, and red for prohibited)
- **Navigation**
 - Route choice
 - Roads vs. trails
 - Bushwhacking
 - What sort of compass to use
 - night vs day
 - always know where you are
 - backstops!
 - General rule – even though you think you’ve gone far enough, you probably haven’t (track distance (paces) and time)

- **Building a team** – choosing teammates,
 - Should have similar goals - Do you expect to win or just finish?
 - Do they laugh at the same things you do?
 - How do they respond to challenges/difficulty?
 - Can you trust them?
 - Are ability levels similar?
 - Taking advantage of each teammate's strengths and weaknesses?
 - How are team decisions made?
- **Practicing/training** for the race (disciplines, nutrition, leadership)
 - Practice the disciplines you are going to do in the conditions you are going to be in.
 - Practice wearing backpack/gear. Training hikes/rides/paddles. Bricks and tricks. Try new foods, find what works for you. Electrolyte replacement.
- **Transition area**
 - Organization is key.
 - Have gear labeled for each segment.
 - Don't let yourself get comfortable – keep moving.
 - Practice transitions!
- **Gear** – pack, clothing, headlamps, bike, what to take with on each leg
 - Most AR's have a "mandatory gear" list.
 - Pack – No bigger pack than necessary for mandatory gear, clothes and food
 - Hydration pack
 - Clothing
 - Plan for the worst weather you might see at the race
 - Extra socks, for longer races
 - Quick-drying material
 - Bike
 - Mountain bike
 - Lighting systems for night racing
 - Cold down hills and hot up hills, so plan accordingly
 - Paddle
 - PFDs
 - Use touring kayak paddles when available
 - Other modifications to canoe (center seat)
 - DRY BAGS!
- **Nutrition** - You burn lots of calories racing. Train your body to refuel on the go.
 - Impossible to replenish it all
 - Body can only process 300 calories an hour
 - Plan to eat something, about every 30 minutes
 - Especially important to eat when it's cold – keep the fire stoked and don't wait because if you forget to eat it might be too late.
 - Pack in the calories in transition areas!
 - Drink at least every 15 minutes
 - Have one teammate remind everyone to drink, and one to remind everyone to eat.
- **Q&A**

RESOURCES

Trailblazers Adventure Racing Club – www.trailblazerar.com

RDU Chapter of TrailBlazers - <http://adventureracing.meetup.com/17/>

ADVENTURE RACING LINGO

Bikewhack - The action of moving off trail, through brush and around other obstacles with a bike in tow. Mainly used by mean race directors who seem to find pleasure in torturing racers.

Bonk - A physical or mental breakdown which makes one unable to continue at speed, or sometimes at all. Most often brought on by dehydration, lack of food energy, low electrolytes, sleep deprivation or some combination of the above. Also - the sound made when your head hits the ground.

Bushwhacking - Traveling off path, generally through rough terrain, broken ground or thick vegetation. As in, "Wow these bushes are thick." (Whack. Whack.)

Check Point - (Also CP) Numbered and ordered waypoints along the race course where the full team must check in with race officials and present their race passport. Numbers range from 2 or 3 in sprint races to 30 or more in expedition length races. (Also know as Passport Control (PC) or Passport Control Point Point (PCP) in that funny French language.)

Cut Off - A time, set by the race organization, by which teams must reach a pre-determined point to continue in the race. Failure to make a cut off may cause a team to be pulled off the course or transferred to a shorter alternative course. Also: What your significant other will do to you when they realize how much they don't see you because you're out training for adventure racing.

Dark Zone - Any section of the race course the race director has determined is unsafe to travel at night, and thus prohibited travel between certain hours. A team held up by a dark zone must not travel in the Dark Zone until the dark zone is lifted. Violation of Dark Zones is grounds for disqualification or penalty.

Diet - This is a new term that is now being used by some races. Current definition is an adventure race simulation where you lose the excess fat...no fees, no rules, no t-shirts, no support.

DQ - Disqualification.

Endo - The act of momentary flight as you sail over your (bike) handle bars and collide with a stationary object, such as the ground.

Gear Drop - (Also GD) An unsupported Transition Area, which means race officials will drop your crate, or bag, of equipment and supplies in a predetermined place, but with no support crew. Less costly for the race organization than a fully supported TA. Promoted by some race directors in the name of a harder race. Duh.

Mandatory Gear - That great list of gear that the race promoters say you have to have during the race, or you get penalized or worse - thrown out. Just remember when you are lugging that 50 lbs of "mandatory gear" that everyone else has to carry it too.

Navigator - That unfortunate soul that volunteers, or gets saddled with, the navigation during a race. This person is both a hero and a villain, changing roles hourly...sometimes by the minute. Just remember when you are thinking of "knocking them off", make sure you get the compass first.

Party Dipper - Derogatory term for a racer who paddles with the same energy that one dips a potato chip. Usually followed up with a beating by another person in the boat.

Passport - An item created by the race organization which each team must carry throughout the race to collect their CPs on. The passport must be signed or punched at each CP. Loss of the passport results in a team disqualification (DQ) as in, "Passport? I don't have the passport..... Don't you have the passport? WHO HAS THE PASSPORT?!!"

Portage - The act of carrying your method of transport. Most often used to describe the carrying of kayaks or canoes, but in AR often used to describe the carrying of bikes over rough and steep terrain. *See also Bikewhack.*

Pre-nup - What you are going to need if you decide to race with your significant other.

Puppy Pile - Most often in cold weather, the way a team gathers in a cluster of bodies to conserve body heat. More common on teams with attractive girls. (Also known as Spooning.)

Push Bush - The tell tale signs found in brush, grass, trees, and other vegetation, when teams of adventure racers have passed through a given area. Not helpful to the front running teams, but can be helpful to the slower teams. That is unless everyone is lost...breadcrumbs anyone?

Rogaine or ROGAINE - Is currently referred to in either form. Is actually an acronym standing for Rugged Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance. Rogaine...now for more than just balding men.

Routing Point - (RP) Points places within a race course used to direct you through a certain area. Routing Points do not usually have any kind of tag or punch. They are merely used to keep you in a certain area, route you around areas or make a race loop longer.

Sleep Dep. - The tendency of Adventure Racers to run until their brains stop functioning from a lack of down time. Short for sleep deprivation.

Sleepmonsters - Those little monsters who appear somewhere around the 48 hour mark and start chanting in your ear "just 5 minutes of sleep...yeah just 5 minutes" or "lull a by baby, on the tree top...". Also known for causing delusions and hallucinations.

Support Crew - (Also Assistance or Ground Crew) Non-racing members from each team who are responsible for managing their team's Transition Areas, transporting team equipment between TA's, and handling the racers as they pass through TA's. Generally not used in sprint length races or in many expedition races with Gear Drops. Those members that feed and clothe you during the race. Kind of like mom.

Team Captain- The one individual responsible for all of the initial information, receiving the checkpoints, and getting various important information about the race. Also known as the one guy (or girl) that gets blamed for any and all mistakes...Lets hear it for those Team Captains.

Transition Area - (Also TA) Defined areas, generally within check points (CP), where teams may receive aid from their support crews. In real terms this means a chance to change clothes, eat substantial food, receive body repairs, and change equipment.

Unranked Team - A team that is allowed to continue without all members, or having missed a portion of the course for any reason. In many cases they may finish the race, but will not be listed in the "official" rankings. Why, you ask? Because real Adventure Racers finish!

Yard Sale - Scattering of equipment over a race course, usually under the influence of stress and sleep deprivation or fatigue, by otherwise responsible racers.