

Rockland

Racers hope to walk, bike, canoe to victory

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Harriman State Park will be crisscrossed today by more than 150 racers who will canoe, bike and walk through the park for more than 12 hours as part of the last New York Adventure Race of the season.

Participants from a dozen countries will compete for two prizes: a slot in the Expedition Ohio race in the fall and one in the New York Balance Bar 24-Hour Adventure.

Fifty-one teams of three will spend the day collecting orienteering points and prizes.

The race starts at 7 a.m. in the north parking lot of the Anthony Wayne Recreation Area of Harriman State Park.

Among the competitors is Chris Rice of Ramapo.

"We're going to have a really good time," Yi Shun Lai, director of media relations for the New York Adventure Racing Association, which is sponsoring the event, wrote in an e-mail.

"There's a lot of racers and a lot of gear. My last race was in Indianapolis — it was a treat to see the Omni Hotel overrun with racers and equipment, while other patrons shuffled nervously around all of our stuff."

The majority of racers were expected to arrive last night and camp overnight in preparation for today's trek.

The races are completed without Global Positioning Systems and without cell phones, pagers or other communication devices.

Racers will boat across all seven lakes in the park, with the first crossing at Lake Sebago at noon.

Adventure racers are expected to have navigation skills including reading maps, moving across areas by rope, swimming and mountain biking. Today was chosen because it's the summer solstice — the longest day of the year.

Adventure racing is a team sport that may include kayaking, trail running, mountain biking, orienteering, horseback riding and rappelling.

It is big on endurance. The shortest race lasts between four and six hours, but events can take as long as 12 days.

There were 65 adventure races worldwide in 1999 and more than 600 in 2001, according to data collected by Outdoor Life Network.

Adventure racers are usually 25 to 55 years old. Three-quarters of those who participate are men.

The New York Adventure Racing Association, with offices on Staten Island, is a nonprofit organization founded in October 2000. It has nearly 300 members. This year, the organization is sponsoring four races and 11 clinics.

For information on adventure racing or about the NYARA, visit www.nyara.org on the Internet.

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