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## **QBP Cyclists Endure Arctic Conditions in Arrowhead 135 Ultramarathon**

*Brutal Cold and Frostbite Tests Riders' Physical and Mental Limits*

BLOOMINGTON, MN – Feb. 23, 2007 – Four QBP cyclists competed in the Arrowhead 135 Ultramarathon, a grueling three-day winter endurance race spanning 135 miles of wilderness from International Falls to Tower, MN. Event organizers called this year's contest "the coldest, ugliest race yet" with temperatures plunging from -28F to -35F. Of 46 participants starting on February 5, only ten finished, including QBP's Dave Gray, who took first place in the cycling category.

Now in its third year, the Arrowhead 135 is part of the BAD135 World Series, an initiative organized by AdventureCORPS, a group promoting ultra-endurance and extreme sports events in forbidding spots like Death Valley. Winding through dense boreal forest, frozen bogs and steep, rugged hills, the Arrowhead course is challenging even in the height of summer. Perhaps that's why athletes came from as far as Brazil to test their mettle by cycling, skiing or running through a region known as the "Icebox of the Nation," some 289 miles north of Minneapolis.

Gray, a product designer for Surly Bikes, completed the snow-packed course in just over 31 hours—half of the officially allotted 60 hours. Apart from suffering minor frostbite on his nose and fingers, he and his Pugsley extreme terrain bike emerged unscathed. And while he is pleased to have a trophy for his mantle, Gray, who ranked second place last year, says he did not enter the race to win.

"Events like this help me find out what I'm made of," he said. "You have to hold it together. You have to be self-reliant." A devout winter camper and year-round bike commuter, he reaps ample rewards just from being outside with nature.

"Spending hours by myself gave me a lot of time to think. It's therapeutic to hear nothing but the crunch of the snow. It put me in a Zen-like state and really cleansed my mind."

Of course, Gray's success is exceptional in a race where most participants dropped out by the half-way mark at MelGeorge's, a back woods resort 74 miles from the starting line. Mike Riemer, marketing manager for Salsa Cycles, managed 69 miles on his Pugsley before succumbing to exhaustion and the onset of hypothermia. Although somewhat disoriented and uncomfortable when the Arrowhead Ski Mobile Patrol rescued him, he realizes his experience could have been much worse.

“The Arrowhead is definitely not your typical bike race,” said Riemer. “It’s not meant to be. Anyone who wants to do this should understand they can get really hurt out there. There’s no easy way out. This is a serious adventure.”

In fact, the Arrowhead’s organizers say participants should be familiar with winter survival skills and be equipped to endure a long wait for help if they are injured. A bivy sack or tent, lightweight stove, sub zero sleeping bag and plenty of food and water are among the many essential items racers must carry.

Steve Bobusch, a senior account executive at QBP and member of the Arrowhead Emergency Team, patrolled the course on snow mobile, searching for lost or injured racers. He said many athletes got into trouble when the sun dropped and temperatures plummeted.

“A lot of people got cold and wet when they were racing to MelGeorge’s,” Bobusch said. “They should have stopped at a trail shelter instead, made a fire and climbed into a bag. You need to rest and get warm. If you go on till you don’t have anything left in your body, you’re done.”

Bobusch said a number of athletes were under dressed, wearing only light jackets and running shoes with wool socks. One poorly equipped runner got lost on the first night of the race. When a rescue team found him wandering aimlessly along the trail, he was hypothermic and had severe frostbite on his feet.

Although everyone entering the race wants to finish, athletes should listen to their bodies and know their own limits, advises P.J. Ramstack, an account executive for Q-Active, QBP’s Nordic skiing and run division.

“I was falling asleep on my bike,” he said. “In fact, a snow mobile came along and scared me awake. I realized that I was tired enough to start making some bad decisions.” After completing 85 miles the derailleur pulley on his Pugsley was freezing up, he had frostbitten toes and was badly in need of sleep. He realized it was time to end his adventure.

Chris Andersen, who works in QBP’s receiving department, rode 74 miles on a single speed Surly Karate Monkey before an old frostbite injury became aggravated, forcing him to leave the race. Although disappointed he did not finish, he is philosophical about it.

“There’s no race in this race,” he says. “You don’t do this to win—you do it for the experience. It’s about what’s inside of you. That’s all that really matters.”

### About QBP

Based in Bloomington, MN, QBP is a leading distributor to the cycling industry. QBP offers domestic and international retailers a wide array of products and services including a 1,500-page catalog, a robust online ordering system, a renowned custom wheel service, a specialty bike-building program and more. QBP continues to be an active cycling advocate for the industry. For more information, please contact Jo Wright, director of marketing at 952-941-9391, or visit: [www.QBP.com](http://www.QBP.com).

### About the Arrowhead 135 Ultramarathon

The Arrowhead 135 Mile Ultramarathon is a founding member of the "135-Miles Worldwide" initiative organized by AdventureCORPS, the producers of the Kiehl's Badwater Ultramarathon, a 135-mile foot race from Death Valley to Mt. Whitney, CA. These two events will join in a series with several new, unique, human-powered races that traverse 135 miles in extreme environments and conditions. Learn more about the Arrowhead 135 at [www.arrowheadultra.com](http://www.arrowheadultra.com). For more info on the BAD135 World Series, visit [www.AdventureCORPS.com](http://www.AdventureCORPS.com)

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