

# Primal Quest athletes endure snakes, rappelling with bikes



Team Journey, at the time in third place, rappel with their bikes down the cliff. Photo/Provided

**By Molly Hucklebridge**

It's been a long day for the Primal Quest Tahoe adventure racers. Wednesday night, after a trek down Heavenly Mountain Resort and a six-mile paddle on Lake Tahoe, racers biked into the night from Cave Rock to the Tahoe Rim Trail. They checked in at Star Lake and continued on to Lover's Leap.

Wednesday at 3pm, endurance racers took off from the Heavenly gondola on the 550-mile adventure race. Coed teams of four must navigate to 31 checkpoints on a multi-sport adventure throughout the Sierra.

Team GODZone from New Zealand, one of the two teams in the lead, pushed their bikes to the top of Lover's Leap at 7:30am only to realize that the checkpoint was below them. They strategically descended the summit and accidentally skipped the designated marker. Making a quick decision, they abandoned their bikes and scurried back up to the checkpoint.

Team Bones, not far behind GODZone, found themselves in the same predicament with their bikes more than 1,000 feet below where they needed to be. So they hiked back up. After stamping their passports, both teams rappelled back down to retrieve their mountain bikes and head cross country toward Kirkwood.



Steve Bannar, co-medical director for Primal Quest and orthopedic surgeon at Tahoe Center for Orthopedics, keeps an eye on racers as they kayak on Tahoe. Photo/Provided

Five hours later at about 1:30pm, three teams – Team Journey, Team Tahoe, and Team NorCal – arrived at the Lover's Leap

checkpoint within 10 minutes of each other and their bikes in hand. They all faced a different challenge: rappel down the cliff with the bikes on their backs so they could bike to the next checkpoint. One participant exclaimed he “hated this bike” another shared he had “never carried \$4,000 [his bike] and 30 extra pounds down a mountain.”

Team GODZones and Team Bones continue to hold the lead.

On Primal Quest, teams must supply their own food and gear. The only race support available is medical support. More than 40 volunteers are providing medical support, including 21 orthopedic physicians, nurses, athletic trainers, and physical therapists from Barton’s Tahoe Center for Orthopedics.

Rattlesnakes have been spotted, but so far no participants have experienced any injuries.

Here is a **tracking map** to know where the racers are and who they are.

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