



## Press release 2005-05-14

At 12:00 the second Explore Sweden AR qualifier started in Kittelfjäll in the southern Lappland mountains. The snow was falling and the sky was still really grey as the teams slowly started walking up the mountain. 13 of the top teams in the world were packed on the starting line, shivering in the cold. Only dressed in tights and wind jackets, they wanted to start moving to get warm. But they also knew that they couldn't sprint off in the beginning, that it would not be sustainable in a long race with this cold.

Race director Mikael Nordström addressed the teams before the start, and all the volunteers helped to do the countdown. Destination Manager Staffan Källbäck, from Team Silva, wished he had been on the starting line. "It is so exciting to start moving after days of packing and gear checks", he said. "But it's also really fun to work with a big race".

Co captain of Team SOLE, Paul Romero, was excited. "It will be a fun and fast race. We hope we will do well and that we are fast enough".

The teams made their way up the mountain as the wind was picking up. In the afternoon it was blowing up to 20 m/s. Race director Mikael Nordström was forced for safety reasons to remove CP 7 and 8, on the other side of the Kittelfjäll mountain. Fredrik Lindström, Team Energizer (SWE), while putting on his crampons to do the rope section, said out loud: "What a soft pace at the start of the race! The teams are realizing this is going to be a long race".

After a rope section up the steep ravines of the mountain, the teams made their way down again to the Via Ferrata. The young Swedish Team Lundhags was sprinting in the lead, but lost it as one of the CP's had blown away in the strong wind. "It's no ones fault, but of course it's no fun," says Hanna Wikberg.

The teams have now started out on the kayak leg in class 1 to 2 rivers. At the first portage Team GoLite had the lead, followed by Team Lundhags. But one of their kayaks flipped in the first rapid, and they got to experience a refreshing swim. "It actually wasn't that that cold" says Hanna Wikberg. "We have our wetsuits on and it helps a lot." Also Team Nike ACG/Balance Bar seemed to think it was too warm outside, as all of the four team members took a swim in the first rapid.

It has now started to rain heavily, and the teams look wetter and wetter as they portage their kayaks around some larger rapids and ice flakes. If the weather does not change this is going to be a very cold and wet race.

Explore Sweden is made possible by partnership with Red Bull, Haglöfs, Petzl and Montrail.

For further information please visit [www.exploresweden.se](http://www.exploresweden.se) or contact Media Manager Stefan Nordström +46 70 642 1910.

