

**2002 Carolina Challenge Adventure Race  
at Anne Springs Greenway, Fort Mill, SC  
on May 18, 2002 by Rad-Adventures.**

Team Name: **Oobe/ AdventureCarolinas.com**  
Team Members: Drew Wilson  
Kim Morrow  
Ken Harris

The race start was supposed to be 11am but because of the weather things took a bit longer and luckily the downpours ceased around 11:20am for what would turn out to be a muddy/ exciting race. For any of you who run, you will have never experienced true cross-country until you've done 4 miles on horse trails after 8 hours of steady rainfall. We, Drew Wilson, Ken Harris and Kim Morrow ([www.EliteFitCoach.com](http://www.EliteFitCoach.com)), started the race at about 11:50 having never met before that morning.

The course would be as follows, or so they said, 4 mile run, special test, orienteering challenge, 200yd. lake swim w/ pfd., 3 more special tests, then 14 or so miles of singletrack mtn. biking. And let me qualify our teams foremost concern, safety, a couple weeks ago Kim, national class road cyclist and past 4time United States Master's National Road Race Champion and a Master's World Champion also President of [www.EliteFitCoach.com](http://www.EliteFitCoach.com)., was told by doctors she'd require surgery soon. Once she was given the okay that any rupture wouldn't be life-threatening, she decided to race with caution. I can't say much about Ken as I first met him at the race but I had my skepticism as his race attire consisted of a cotton t-shirt and baggy shorts. As it turns out, don't let the clothes your teammates/ competitors wear fool you! Ken, is an awesome multisport athlete, he led us out on the course following blue arrows for running, red ones later for biking.

The race started off with what the race director styled as a 4-mile mud-fest. We got a pretty good start on the run in the front pack with the solo males and one co-ed Marine team in front of us. I cannot describe how slippery/ muddy the run was, luckily because of the rain earlier everyone was pretty much wet already so getting muddy wasn't so bad, had it been a warm, sunny day, it wouldn't have been as much fun. The run went without too many falls, learning that sometimes the better footing meant going straight through the horse bogs instead of skirting off to the side. After about 35 minutes and MORE than 4 miles we came to the first test, a 20yd. static line across a portion of the lake. We made quick time of this obstacle and pressed on for another 1/4 mile to the orienteering section. Once there, we rec'd a map of the lake with four lettered points scattered around the perimeter (A,B,C,D). I did a quick check of the map to get my bearings and off we went hitting the four points about as fast as we could run the ~2 miles around the lake. Generally, the checkpoint/ flags, were set in the woods off the trail where we'd have to search once we were in the general area. After getting all our letters and having been running for about 50 minutes, nearly 7 miles by my estimates, we got to wash off with a lake swim of ~200yds. This went without incident except I hadn't pre-planned the action of quickly putting on my pfd, while I had my Camelbak on and zipping up our passport

so it wouldn't get wet. My teammates had already donned their pfd's and were heading out across the lake so I jumped in put the partially seal ziplock bag in my mouth and proceeded to swim across the lake with my pfd half on. Swimming is usually my forte but this was awkward and difficult. Awkward in that the pfd was flopping around as I swam and difficult because my head was right at water level and water was coming in my mouth because of the ziplock bag I had my teeth clamped down on. But we made it and were informed the 1<sup>st</sup> place co-ed team of Marines was about 7min. ahead of us.

We got our first special test instruction, "Must pick up one 8 foot by 4 inch. wood plank and a teammate and carry 100 yds. to the next special test". I grabbed the plank and Kim piggy-backed on Ken to the next test, the Electric Fence. It was a line strung taught between to poles about 3.5 feet high. Too high to step over or jump and land on two feet. I'd seen and done this same test at Hi-tec Atlanta last year and used my teammate from that race Derek Kozlowski's tumbling technique to quickly dive headfirst and roll safely over. Next was Kim, Ken hoisted her up and I steadied her and was ready to catch her on the other side, again no incident. Then came Ken, he'd obviously never done this before and certainly needs to work on his technique for the next race. He tried something, ended up successfully clearing the line but landing hard, flat on his back momentarily stunning him. He shook it off and we went to the 3<sup>rd</sup> test which was the "Broken Ladder". There were 4 cinder blocks spaced about 7 feet apart. The instruction read for us to use one other plank to move our team across the distance without stepping on the ground. I went first carrying the second plank and crossing to block #2, then laid that plank down between 2 and 3, Kim and Ken moved on over to block 2 and carefully handed me the 1<sup>st</sup> plank which I placed between block 3 and 4. We got through the test pretty easily to find out we were 9 minutes behind the Marines now. We went on to transition to mtn. Bikes and were off to catch the leaders.

The first 1.5 miles was on a gravel road before heading into the slippery singletrack. But first we had to cross a rain-swollen creek on the gravel road. I'd done it before on last years course and then also a month earlier when I was here. I told Kim and Ken to keep their speed up so as to make the crossing. It was a bit deeper and wider than usual at nearly 2 feet deep in the middle and 5 yds. wide. It was fun. Once on the singletrack we cautiously made our way passing a couple solo males. Within about 30 min., we caught the Marines and were in 1<sup>st</sup> place in the co-ed division. The trail for the most part was in good condition with mucky places on the flats. I was the first to crash, on an uphill section of slippery red-mud. My wheels spun and I couldn't unclip before falling over. It wasn't much of a fall but after I'd been racing hard for 1.5 hours, it took me a couple minutes to regain my composure and catch up with my teammates. Instead of taking chances hurting ourselves and taking great care that Kim didn't crash too hard, we made appoint to run any sections that were difficult and call out obstacles to teammates behind. Once we were in the "co-ed" lead, we backed off to be safe and pushed hard on the flats and up-hills. Kim crashed a couple times on the slippery roots but was okay. After about an hour of riding, the muddy conditions began to take its toll on our bikes, causing brakes and shifting to falter. We made it to the last checkpoint where they only asked to see your passport as most had disintegrated from the wet conditions, and were told there were about 2 more miles to the finish. Once we got out of the woods and back on the gravel

road we put the hammer down to race to the finish. But we still had to cross the creek again and at this angle we'd have greater speed to make the crossing. The race directors had photographers stationed at the crossing to get some incredible shots. I hit the water at about 30mph, though having forgotten to change gears for the steep other side, was stopped right at the edge to push out but the picture shows a huge spray as I hit the 2 feet of water at speed. We had to climb back out of the creek bottom and then were met with one last challenge before the finish line. We had to carry our bike through cargo netting, stepping through without touching the webbing. We finished in a respectable time of 2:37:29 1<sup>st</sup> co-ed behind the winning all male local team and 7 solos. For that win, Team Oobe/ AdventureCarolinas.com qualified for the Sprint National Championships in Texas in Oct. If anyone is interested in Adventure Racing, contact Drew Wilson or Richard Ridlehuber, (both UMBA and Freewheelers members) for information on races and gear to get started!

For more information on this race and others produced by Rad-Adventures, visit their website at: [www.Rad-Adventures.com](http://www.Rad-Adventures.com).

To see some cool pics of the race visit:

<http://www.photorelect.com/scripts/prsm.dll?eventthumbs?event=00TB0076>

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