FOCUS ON WINNERS: DIXIE DANSERCOER



Braving the elements

Dixie Dansercoer started taking part in polar expeditions around 15 years ago and is now preparing for his most ambitious expedition to date. During the trip, which is scheduled for 2011-12, Mr Dansercoer will face the fiercest elements nature has to offer and will need the most effective gear he can find if he is to stay the course. He has been working with a team of experts, including a number of textile experts, to ensure he has the lightest, most durable and most protective gear out there. Because his requirements are so unusual and specific, this is a continuous process and one in which there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Prior to taking part in these polar expeditions, the Belgium-born explorer was a keen participant in various endurance sports. He has held records or won prizes for high-altitude mountain biking, windsurfing and ultramarathon running. His experience in these disciplines not only gave him an advantage on a physical level, it also helped him to understand just how important having the right equipment for each activity is. He was able to identify the challenges of each sport and find gear that would offer him the right level of support, protection, moisture management, and other properties.

In 1997-98, Mr Dansercoer made a record-breaking crossing of Antarctica with Alain Hubert. Then, in 2006, the European Space Agency (equivalent to NASA in the US) commissioned the two explorers to measure snow cover in the Arctic so that they could calibrate measurements taken with the CryoSat-2 satellite. The pair left Cape Arkticheskiy, Siberia, on March 1, 2007, and reached the North Pole after 55 days. They made it to Greenland in a further 51 days; it was the first

Dixie Dansercoer is a well known explorer, endurance athlete and photographer. He recently appeared as a speaker at the Innovations in Sports Textiles conference in Ghent, Belgium (June 2010).

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