

REDBULL X-ALPS TEAM CANADA SPONSORED BY PATHFINDER

APRIL 12, 2024

Pathfinder Asset Management was proud to sponsor James Elliott, client and lifelong friend of Nigel's to compete in the RedBull X-Alps.

The RedBull X-Alps is a fiercely contested battle across the Alps lasting almost two weeks in which around 30 athletes run, hike and fly by paraglider up to 150km a day passing set Turnpoints positioned across iconic mountains and famous resorts. With athletes often hiking up to 4,000m of vertical ascent a day and running as much as 100km on foot, it's not only an incredible test of physical endurance but it has become recognized as the supreme test for the world's best hike-and-fly athletes.

The RedBull X-Alps is only open to the world's best paraglider pilots and adventure athletes, but uniquely it is a race where men and women compete equally. The race was founded in 2003 by the late adventurer Hannes Arch and has taken place every two years since then. The 2023 edition will therefore mark the 20th anniversary of the iconic race.

James was picked to lead Team Canada and competed against 32 other teams from around the world.

Both the training and the race were unbelievably grueling. Jame's training schedule was broken up into two parts: Endurance and Flying. For almost a year, he would alternate almost daily between 20km runs and 40km mountain hikes, all with a weighted pack on his back. For the flying component of his training, James competed in other hike and fly races, including the X-Pyr where he placed 11/42 teams, and the X-RedRocks in Utah. James had a target of being in the air for 200 hours each year, leading up to the RedBull X-Alps.





There was also flight specific training he went through, where he would practice taking off and landing from very tight spaces and flying in windy and difficult conditions, trying to replicate what he would face cruising over the Alps.

Beyond flying, James needed a great deal of support from the ground and assembled a team to help him. Jonathan Klimow was James's chief race strategist and also ran his social media leading up to and during the race. Basically, he would sit behind a computer for 17 hours a days, reading weather patterns, planning James' route and responding to questions or ideas from James in the air. Dan Vallaries backed up Jonathan as a secondary strategist. Norm Krcmar drove the van on the ground and also was the cook for the team and Guillaume Labranche was the sherpa and in charge of all the gear.

The race took off on June 11, 2023 in Kitzbühel and is one massive loop around the alps. The race travels East through Austria, North into Germany, then quickly cuts back into Austria before heading west through Switzerland. The Athletes navigate some of the countries' highest mountains, before turning anti-clockwise around Mt. Blanc and start heading back East through Switzerland and into Italy, across the lakes then back over the Alps one last time to finish at Zell am See on the South side of the Alps.

There are 15 Turn points that must be tagged along the way. At some, the athletes have to stop and physically sign their name and at others, they are digitally scanned as the athlete flies over. The goal is to spend as much time in the air as you can as you are only allowed to move by either hiking and flying during daylight hours. James' best day was 200kms of flying. His toughest was only 17km of airtime and the rest spent hiking all day down a mountain, when the wind conditions were too tough to launch. This almost cost him the ability to finish the race on time.

Out of 32 athletes, 23 finished and I am very proud to say that Thetis Island's very own James Elliot, was among them and became the first ever Canadian to finish the race. Overall, he placed 22/32.

Please visit the links below for more information and documentaries on James' historical feat. On behalf of everybody at Pathfinder, congratulations James. We sure are proud of you!!!

[RedBull X-Alps documentary](#)

[James Elliott reveals his magic moments](#)

[Global News feature](#)

