

## ATC 2006 Race report posted on Sleepmonsters.com

By Jesper Kunuk Egede

### Countdown has started to ATC 2006

ATC 2006 starts tomorrow, Saturday July 23 at 10:00 Greenlandic time (GMT -3). Today Friday is the day of preparations. At 12:00-3:00 PM, the teams were allowed to check out the canoes in which they are going to spend a considerable amount of time over the next days. To some teams, this idea is horrid while others are really looking forward to the canoe parts of the race.

The weather is beautiful. All over town and the nearby vicinity, you see team members checking out the landscape, wearing nothing but shorts and T-shirts (well, shoes, too ...). It's not as warm as last year's first day, but then again, with a heat record of +27°C on that particular day, this is hard to beat.

This year we have eight teams from almost as many countries. That is bending the truth a bit, as we have two teams from Greenland and two from Denmark, but we do also have teams from the United States, United Kingdom, Iceland, and France. It's actually the first time ever, that we have a French team joining the race. Also, we have never had an American team that actually made it over the finishing line while still in contest so a heavy burden is also resting on their shoulders.

### Chance Encounter

What are the odds? Recruiting team members can happen in many ways. One of the more unusual ways of recruiting team members is when you find one while crossing the Greenland Ice Cap. Team Captain Amma Kleist of Arctic Ladies: "Recently, when I was crossing the Ice Cap with three other women, we suddenly met a group of British people crossing the Ice Cap in the opposite direction. One of them was Anna McCormack who was helping a woman in a wheel chair [!] cross the Ice Cap. We hit it off really well up there on the ice and decided that if we were a member short for our Greenlandic ladies' team, we could just call Anna, and she'd show up. So we called and here she is!"

It's become a tradition to have a female Greenlandic team and this year is no exception. Amma Kleist heads a team including veteran Pia Nielsen of Tasiilaq who started out as an official and is now racing for the fourth time. New on the team are Anna and Pitsi Geisler.

### The Return of the Happy Icelanders

Last year, everywhere where the Icelandic team went, you could be sure to encounter smiles and happy laughs. At the harbour, where Team Intersport is fitting Styrofoam seats into the canoe, the situation is a pure flashback to last year. They just can't help having fun.

"This year, our priorities are 1. to compete in the race, 2. to race in a better time than last year, and 3. to enjoy ourselves and be happy. No, wait, make number 3 the main priority," says Team Captain Trausti Valdimarsson. "Actually, we are here to win," chips in Stefán Örn Einarsson, the only new member on the team. He's here instead of the unlucky fourth member who last year had to leave the race due to a very bad case of the runs. Back this year with Trausti are Pétur Helgason and Erlandur Birgisson. We are pretty sure they'll be the sunshine group again this year.

### Local Heroes

When the local team arrived back in Tasiilaq after five days of racing last year, their eyes lit up

when they learned that they finished 3rd in the race. This was a surprise to most people, including themselves, but as team after team left the competition in 2005, they steadily moved up the ladder. Last year the team's overall time was 60 hours and the objective this year is to do the race in 50 hours. "Ranking is not so important this year," says team captain Pertti Frandsen, "2007 will be our year." "Yeah, right," laughs Klaus Geisler, "we'll be number 1 this year!" Lots of locals hope so. New members on Team Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen are Peter Nûko and Per Rasmussen.

### **Team Building**

A new concept this year is the inclusion of a team building team, a concept offered to major corporations and other large companies. Construction Company Pihl A/S picked up the challenge and have sent a five-person team (in case one of the team members have to exit the race, they have sent a reserve). Three engineers, an architect and an IT specialist won the seats on the team after 50 employees at the huge company had sent in applications to participate in the team building.

The team fared beautifully at today's canoe training even if it was only the third time that they were in a canoe together (they've trained 2 x 2 hours on a small pond in Denmark). Their aim is to complete the entire race but there is room for adjustments on this particular team's itinerary along the route.

### **Don't feed the dogs, Feed the Machine**

Everyone visiting East Greenland knows that there is no way in hell you should get anywhere near the sled dogs unless accompanied by their owner. A lot more approachable is Feed the Machine's sole female member Bernice Pierson, who's as gorgeous as the young J.Lo of yore. "Feed the Machine is usually a three person team of Christian Burke, Jayson Browne and me but for this race we have invited New Zealander Neal Radford along for the adventure.

We met him at another race and really clicked. Feed the Machine has done a lot of 24-hour races in America, but we have also ventured out for longer races like the Patagonia Expedition Race and ECOMotion Brazil Expedition Race," Bernice tells us. "As we don't know the skills of the other teams, our main objective at the moment is to enjoy ourselves and, already, the surroundings have surpassed our dreams."

### **Bend your tongue around this!**

As it is more or less impossible for the officials to pronounce the name of Team WCup Issy les Moulineaux, they have already been dubbed Team Easy On, a small and kind-hearted joke referring to a Danish TV show. The four French guys, Captain Pierre-Etienne Leonard, Guillaume Lepors, Gauthier Bancarel and Mathieu Beunier are competing together for the first time.

"Actually, Gauthier joined our team only a week ago, as the original fourth member broke his shoulder," Pierre-Etienne tells. "We are used to doing shorter races so, for us, the first challenge is not to run too fast on the first stages and use all our energy too soon."

### **The Clones are back!**

Team PharmaNord are competing again for the third time. "First time around we came in third, last year we came in second, so let's see how we do this year," says Captain Christian Helweg

of the Danish/Greenlandic team. Last year all four team members were of equal height and stature, so they were quickly dubbed The Clones, but this year there is an exception. As one of the original team members were injured earlier this year, Henrik Jørgensen has stepped in to team up with Christian, Martin Gjødvad and Carsten Hammerik. Carsten is competing with the four Icelandic racers in the category of Most Happy Racer.

### **They Must Be Giants**

No one has forgotten how one of the members of the British team came in last year, paddling with only one arm as he had broken the other, yet still making top rank. The team formerly known as Saab Salomon are back with a few changes in the line up. This year, under the name of Team Eastgreenland.com,

Captain Ben Bardsley and Andrew Davies are back with new team members Jim Davies and Morgan Donnely. It's the first time they've come with an all-male line-up. The legendary Nicola Davies of the famous Davies Adventure Racing family decided not to come this year, as she has already won the Arctic Team Challenge twice. Let's see if Ben, Andrew, Jim and Morgan will secure a third consecutive British win of The Arctic Team Challenge.

### **Preparations galore!**

All day, officials have been working their butts off to ensure that the race will run smoothly when we start tomorrow. When the teams are in town, officials will try to make the racers' stay as comfortable as possible – it's going to be tough enough as it is when the race starts. But as an official said earlier today, paraphrasing David Sedaris: "As long as the racers are in town we'll be nice. But if they are looking for sympathy along the routes they can look it up in the dictionary. It's right between 'shit' and 'syphilis'."

Most teams arrived yesterday with plane from Iceland. Afterwards, teams were sailed with speedboats from Kulusuk to Tasiilaq and got the time to do some shopping before the welcome dinner. At the welcome dinner, officials and all teams were acquainted and Icelandic singer Hera entertained and was wildly popular. She 'll be back, singing at base camp later in the week.

Tonight after dinner, the first gear check will take place and then it's bedtime for the racers before one of the world's toughest adventure races starts at 10:00 AM tomorrow.

## **Arctic Team Challenge Race day 1**

### **Stage 1: Canoe and climbing**

#### **"Good Luck, everybody!"**

You'd think Inspector Closeau was around, mais non, it's Pierre-Etienne Leonard of WCup Issy les Moulineaux who shouts out with his great French accent. This kind of team spirit that actually transcends the usual competitive barriers between teams is very emblematic of Arctic Team Challenge. Here even the closest competitors are considered friends. Obviously, the second the cannon goes off to signal the start of Arctic Team Challenge, it's kill or get killed, but right now, just before start, there's still room for solicitude. And if this year will resemble the previous five years, kindness will prevail as much as competitiveness. But enough of this sentimental crap. We'll leave the boo-hoing to the sob sisters.

Today's race started in the greatest of weather. Even if it's been sunny for a few days, today is much warmer than the previous two and the teams were all psyched about today's stage

where they have to canoe to the foot of Polheim's Mountain, climb the 1,000 m high mountain and canoe back to Tasiilaq. It's a picnic.

A couple of hundred people had gathered at race start and many ran along with the teams from the starting point to the harbour to see the teams sail off. The bloodthirsty crowd had hoped for at least one team to tip over and fall into the icewater, mais non, all teams got off to a great start.

This year there is a general feeling that we have some ace teams around. That makes it a lot more exciting for the runners but obviously also for the spectators.

TODAY'S UNOFFICIAL RANKING (it has yet to be confirmed by the judges)  
(Due to wind conditions, the last five teams had to paddle a longer route. This has been adjusted in the final times).

1. eastgreenland.com 02:55:26
2. PharmaNord 03:12:25
3. WCup Issy les Moulineaux 03:29:45
4. Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen 03:40:18
5. Intersport Iceland 04:08:13
6. Arctic Ladies 04:28:37
7. Feed the Machine 05:24:03
8. Pihl A/S 07:36:48

### **And the winner is...**

At 2:19:40 AM this afternoon, Team Eastgreenland made it across the finish line as the first team of the day. At this time, some of the other teams were still on top of the mountain. "We took our time at the top. It's so beautiful up there with a view of icebergs, lakes, mountains," said Ben Bardsley upon arrival.

However, the rules of this stage of ATC is that when you get near the top of Polheim's Mountain, the timer is shut off so that people get a chance to enjoy the view from the top (and to ensure that someone doesn't plunge 3-400 meters to his deaths if he make a wrong turn during rush hour on top of the mountain). Most teams take their time while they are up there to enjoy the exceptional view. This also means that we will not know the ranking of the teams until tonight.

### **The Fast, The French and The Furious**

Our French friends are also comfortable about the prospect of today's stage. They are used to canoeing in 2-person canoes but at start were not worried about being four in a canoe. They intended to do some fast racing today. And they did: "Wow, it was hard and steep. The top was soo high! But it was a very good first day," says Pierre-Etienne of les Moulineaux and continues: "We came of to a good start and came in second in the canoe on checkpoint A1, but we could not keep up with the Eastgreenland.com or PharmaNord up the hill. But then again, they know the route from the past two years. We might just be back next year..." Matthieu and Gauthier chip in: "We've had one important lesson: It's a very rocky country!"

### **Beaming Ladies**

Girl teams are always popular at ATC and Arctic Ladies will not be an exception. Yesterday Anna McCormack was ill and throwing up but today she feels much better: "We'll just take it easy and steady," she says. "We're a stronger team this year," Pia Nielsen tells us, "but seeing how strong the other teams appear to be we will probably race against our time from last year rather than race against the other teams." However, coming down from the mountain, the girls

had new energy. "I'm very pleased with our performance today. We did a lot better than last year, and I'm very proud of my team. We were very surprised that we passed the Icelandic team in the race to cross the fjord," says a beaming Team Captain Amma Kleist. The Ladies also participated in ATC last year, and Amma was very glad to be back up on the Polheim's Mountain once again, describing the feeling as one of the biggest rushes you can have. Polheim's Mountain is steep but they were not at anytime worried because they all felt they had the situation under control. The new girl Anna is a great asset to the team as she adds some hiking and mountain skills to the team - and the rest of the team could show her the terrain here in East Greenland.

### **B.Lo**

After seeing the comparison to J.Lo on yesterday's race news, Bernice's team mates have started calling her B.Lo and are even contemplating a new motto for the team, "Fire down B.Lo". Bernice may not be too thrilled about that but she's a big girl - she can take it. Feed the Machine feel comfortable about the canoe and are not worried about today's stage.

We talked to them again after their return to Tasiilaq: "We were a little surprised how technical it was, but there were safety spots where there needed to be, and that made it a spectacular experience," says Jayson Browne, and continues: "We went on a little detour that made the trip down the mountain rougher, but it was like a ride at Disney World!"

The team felt they started out a little slow and "we took a different route and we paid for it." The lack of mountaineering experience didn't take that much of a toll on them, because there were safety ropes were there had to be. "However, we miscalculated the amount of supplies to bring and we have to remember that next time," ends Jayson.

### **PharmaNord**

After the race we talked to the new team member of PharmaNord, Henrik Jørgensen. To Henrik, this was a very different experience because he is an orienteering runner. He was given the map of the trail they were going to follow, but he didn't use it much since his team mates knew most of the way. When he got to the peak of Polheim's Mountain, it was an amazing experience. Overall, the trip went by at a good pace and everyone could keep up. The whole thing was very rewarding to Henrik, because he learned a lot about the terrain, and he felt he added something to the team with his orienteering experience. He very much looks forward to the days to come and to play with his team mates.

## **Amazing race by eastgreenland.com! RACE DAY 2**

At 9 PM the teams started out with a 35 kilometers long mountain bike route. The weather is fantastic; it's sunny and the wind calm. Remember how we wrote about solicitude yesterday? Well, solicitude does not a fun race make, so before start we tried to rake up some animosity between the British and French teams. After all, these two nations were warring for hundreds of years. But noooooo! They're as polite as can be and do not make any attempt to put down the other team.

"They might pulverize us," goes Andrew Davies of Eastgreenland.com and Saint Etienne of WCup Issy les Moulineaux comes back with "We'll just try to keep up with the Davies family. The British team is so helpful". They sound like ladies who lunch.

### **Mountain biking**

All the teams finished the mountain bike stages of the day. To many, the biking is the killer of ATC, yet they know that the only way to continue the race is to overcome this horrible part of the race.

Typically, the Icelanders have been smiling all day. Even on the steepest of hills in Tasiilaq, they smiled every time the onlookers cheered on them. On their fifth round, a woman yelled out, "You look good!" and Erlendur yelled back "I feel great, too!"

It's been tougher for the Arctic girls. While going uphill, we had a chat with Pia Nielsen: "It feels great to have such a strong team. The only disadvantage for me is that this makes me the weakest link on the bikes." However, going uphill Anna has been very strong and has pulled Pia on many stretches. When hearing of Ben's saddle, Anna's dry comment is: "What good is a race without a challenge?"

Eastgreenland.com managed to be the first ones to finish the mountain bike stage. After the mountain bike stage, the teams split up in twos. Two people went to B1, two to B2 and then they met up on B3 and together continued to B4 at the glacier.

### **The teams arrived back from the 35 kilometres mountain biking stage in the following times:**

Eastgreenland.com 2:42:34  
Les Moulineaux 2:50:10  
PharmaNord 2:53:33  
Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen 3:04:07  
Intersport Iceland 3:20:01  
Feed the Machine 3:51:30  
Pihl A/S 4:12:35  
Arctic Ladies 4:30:35  
These times are unofficial

After the three mountain tops

Once again, Eastgreenland.com was first over the finish line. Very convincingly, too, as none of the other teams had even made it to B4 at that time. There was a great deal of awe among the officials at the finish line who had rushed there just a few minutes before, not expecting the team to arrive that fast.

Ben Bardsley, on his 3rd Arctic Team Challenge, had some unexpected thing in store for him today. When they started out in the mountain biking stage, his seat fell off, and, after reattaching it 8-9 minutes later, two minutes went by and it broke off. After that, he took 1½ lap without a seat! "I do feel that it did in some way affect the following tasks, but we did manage to win the time back and also win the race," Ben says and continues: "It does help that two of us have been here before, but we also have two new people joining us this year - they have been amazing! We are a unit but each of us has our own goal to achieve."

### **Feed the Nerves**

This morning, B.Lo of Feed the Machine was nervous: "I don't like the idea of stage races because I get too nervous before every stage. I like expedition races a lot better 'cause then I'll only get nervous once." "Ah, she'll be fine 10 minutes after we starts," says team captain Christian Burke. Hopefully she soon got over it.

### **Pharma nord**

For PharmaNord, today has been a day with ups and downs. "It was a hard ride today, the running was really hard, and the backpacks were heavier", says Henrik Jørgensen. They maintained their speed, but two of them made a detour and came to lose some minutes finding each other, on the top of the Pyramid Mountain. Luckily there were no injuries. "The bicycling ride was rough, though, with all the hills and the constant changing of speed. The difference from yesterday was that there was more running and our legs were tired from

yesterday," continues Henrik. The Polheim Mountain was more vertical but today was harder. "We felt we helped each other, and that the teamwork went really well," concludes Henrik.

### **Les Moulineaux**

Pierre-Etienne of WCup Issy les Moulineaux felt they had a really good start, and the teammates were there for each other. "We are friends before teammates. We haven't been in this competition before, and so we feel they have a better chance than others. We don't need to win and we are pleased with the 3rd place for now - we just want to have fun." However, they do want to beat PharmaNord because they feel that they have a chance there. The English team has helped them a lot. The real race will start tomorrow. "Be careful," he says with a small laugh. They had no time today to enjoy the scene all they saw was rocks rocks and rocks, but they are here for two days after the race, and so they will have time to see the sights. Today there was a little bit lower enthusiasm because it was so hard. Now they are very tired, and want to play cards and go to sleep.

### **This is the unofficial score of the second day along with the accumulated score:**

Team	Today's time	Accumulated time
Eastgreenland	6:16:28	9:11:54
PharmaNord	7:26:24	10:38:49
Les Moulineaux	7:56:10	11:25:55
Neriusaaq	8:31:10	12:20:37
Intersport	9:28:00	13:46:10
Arctic Ladies	11:18:27	15:57:08
Feed the Machine	Available Monday	
Pihl A/S	Available Monday	

At the time of this update, Feed the Machine are on their way from B4 to the finish line. Pihl A/S are on their way from B3 to B4.

## **Mittivakkat Glacier Ahead! RACE DAY 3**

Today, the teams have to do a relay biking race and then trek on land and glacier to the basecamp where we all stay overnight until tomorrow and the final looooooong expedition stage. Today's stage is about 45 kilometers.

The French are not as loud as usual at the starting line. Instead Pierre-Etienne and Guillaume opt for a good luck hug at the starting line. Andrew Davies is not biking the first relay round and from the sideline he's cheering not on his teammates, but his new best friends, the French: "Allez, allez!" he yells at the top of his lungs.

### **Gentleman Agreement**

At the race briefing this morning, Race Directors Anders Stenbakken and Hans Christian Florian makes a gentleman agreement with all the teams: "Last year there was so much competition between some of the teams and afterwards they were sorry that they could not enjoy the view from C6, the summit on the glacier. So let's make an agreement: Everybody stays at least 10 minutes at C6 to enjoy the view." Andrew Davies applauds this like a madman. He was on one of the teams that rushed through last year.

## **Crash**

Per Rasmussen of Team Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen is not looking too well. His hand is bandaged and he has scratches in his face. Yesterday, he took one hell of a crash, falling over the steer on his bike. "It's not as bad as it looks, though," he smiles.

Miss the concert? Never!

"It's going to be a long day," says Arctic Ladies' Pitsi Ottosen, who at 23 is the youngest girl in the race. The youngest racer of all is Peter Nūko of Team Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen, who's a year younger. More worrisome to some of the other Arctic Ladies is the idea that they might miss the concert with the wonderful Icelandic singer Hera at basecamp tonight. This is a worry that is equally shared with the Icelandic team. "We are a bit beaten today," says Erlendur Birgisson of Team Intersport Iceland. "But I really don't want to miss Hera's concert!" Typical for an Icelander: they always know how to enjoy life.

Hera is huge in their native Iceland, having already recorded five albums and last year played 37 concerts in two months in Iceland alone. She has also warmed up for acts like Nick Cave and Joe Cocker.

## **Feed the hunger**

Ben and Jim of Eastgreenland.com is giving advice to the American Feed the Machine. Pointing at the map, they say stuff like "This might be a safe bet. There'll be no 50 feet steep walls down to the glacier" and "you could also try this route..." "Great, now we have absolutely no idea what to do," laments Christian Burke. "The race is much longer today, so we have to pack extra provisions," Christian continues. B.Lo is not feeling well. She's been nauseous all morning but, thankfully, at the starting line she says she feels better.

"All the people here are really fast," Christian says and continues: "We have a lot of apprehension on our team because of the terrain. We have to stop and go and stop and go. I kinda enjoy it, but it takes four to make it all work." Meanwhile, Neal is gathering provisions, making sure they bring enough food and the right food. Hopefully, the beauty of today's stage will cheer them all up.

## **The toughest team building in the world!**

Pihl A/S is here not so much as a conventional adventure racing team but more as a team building team. And what team building! Without annoying instructors along the road, they themselves have to find their way along the route. For the past two days they have opted for the entire route but for today, the race directors and Pihl have made a shorter route. Instead of doing the relay race and going to all checkpoints, the Pihl team will bike to Checkpoint 1, leave the bikes behind and then trek to C5 at beginning of the glacier. If they are the first team to arrive, they have to wait at C5 for another team to cross the glacier so they can follow in their footsteps. Safety first. From C5 they go to C6 and then to basecamp (you can see the map by following the link at the top of this news briefing).

Kasper Knudsen, the reserve on the Pihl team is thrilled at the starting point: "Today, I get to go along. I'm so excited and can't wait to go. Of course I've been running around with the camera crews for the past days but to actually start out in the race feels so good." Good luck to Kasper and the rest. Among the official, everybody is so impressed of the Pihl team. They have not been training that much and are in a race with some of the top racers from the world elite – seen from that perspective, this is the most impressive team building ever.

These are the results of the relay race:

Eastgreenland.com 1:23:12

Les Moulineaux 1:26:12

PharmaNord 1:35:28

Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen 1:39:55

Intersport Iceland 1:44:14

Feed the Machine 1:58:35

Arctic Ladies 2:16:27

Pihl A/S Team Pihl is not doing the relay race today

These times are unofficial

Right now, most officials are at basecamp or are heading there. This means we will not be able to give you thorough updates until tomorrow afternoon. We'll try to call in the results of the day via satellite telephone so we can update the times tonight. But come back Tuesday afternoon for more pictures and race news.

## **Eastgreenland.com won! EXPEDITION DAYS**

### **Eastgreenland.com won Arctic Team Challenge!**

There were a few changes to the expedition stage of ATC. As the route for Day 3 this year was extremely hard, the expedition stage was shortened somewhat. A checkpoint was skipped, saving the faster teams about 3 hours – and the slower teams will save up to 6-7 hours on this. That must feel so good!

Also, checkpoint D4 was moved. Huge icebergs at D4 worried the security people and we decided to move the D4 checkpoint to another safer location. Safety first...

When we last updated, the teams had finished the mountain bike relay race and went on to cross the island to basecamp, traversing difficult mountains and glaciers.

Base camp is supposed to be a place where the teams gather to collect strength for the next day's expedition race. There's usually a concert and some really good grilled food. However, most teams missed out on the concert (only Eastgreenland.com made it), but that was not a problem for singer Hera. She gave two concerts. This meant that the Icelandic team and the Ladies actually got to hear her beautiful singing.

The teams started at 9:00 in the morning. **These were the arrival times at basecamp:**

Eastgreenland.com 18:32:07

PharmaNord 20:26:57

Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen 21:03:10

Les Moulineaux 22:40:50

Intersport Iceland 23:22:35

Pihl A/S 23:01:40 (did a shorter route)

Arctic Ladies 16:07:10

Feed the Machine 02:56:56

### **Starting out**

At the starting line at basecamp, Team PharmaNord were the first to get started. We operated with a staggered start today. This means PharmaNord started at 11:00, Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen at 11:10, Intersport Iceland at 11:20, Pihl A/S at 11:40, Arctic Ladies at 11:50, Feed the Machine and WCup Issy les Moulineaux at 12:00, and Eastgreenland.com at 12:10. This made it more difficult for the competing teams to find out how the other teams were doing.

Martin Dybvad of PharmaNord was tired in the morning. "Ohhh, it's a freaking long way home." However, at the starting line, he was all energy, yelling 'Jalla jalla!' right before start, ready for the last 120 kilometers (well, a little bit less because of the removal of D5). When the team ran off, Saint-Etienne of WCup Issy les Moulineaux yelled 'see you in 4 days!'

### **Eastgreenland.com won again!**

It's not like it was the biggest surprise but obviously that did not make the triumph any smaller. Eastgreenland.com ran across the finish line Wednesday morning at 06:26:05 AM and thereby won the Arctic Team Challenge 2006. They ran the expedition stage in 18:16:05.

About ½ hour later, PharmaNord crossed the finish line also, thereby taking second place in the race. Their time for the expedition stage was 20:07:55.

### **Strong local heroes**

The big surprise of the race was the great success of the local team, Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen. They came in third last year, but seeing the strength of the teams they had not expected to get as high a rank this year. Their goal was to get a better time than last year – they not only succeeded in that. They also kept their 3rd place rank. "To us, it's also sort of a double victory," says Klaus Geisler of the team. Last year we came in third because so many stronger teams left the contest for various reasons – we were kind of the last people standing. This year we have come in third because we actually were stronger than the other teams. That feels really good."

### **Teambuilding**

The Pihl A/S team has also made it across the finish line. They had a shorter route but still it's magnificent that this group of people who have only been training for 6 weeks have had such great success with the race. One of the team members, Kristian Röhl, quit the race yesterday because he got sick, but the remaining four members made it through the wilderness to arrive in Tasiilaq this morning at 10:21 AM. Their total time for the expedition stage was 22:41:39 (on a shorter route).

### **A chat with Jim**

Yesterday after the 3rd stage, we had a chat with Jim Davies of eastgreenland.com: "It was a very enjoyable day. The glacier was fabulous and we have never seen anything like it. We also felt good in the sense that we weren't busting ourselves nor going slow. The day started out good with the bike ride, and then on the run over the glacier went by steadily. We had time to enjoy the scenery and take a couple of photos!"

Jim continues: "Best of all was that we were not scared for the trip over the glacier. It's summer and we can see the problems before they occur. Winning the race day by day is always nice and the reason for this success probably lies in the fact that we are equally fit and therefore can relate to one another in the sense that we know what we can handle."

Feed the Machine made it before midnight and everybody – the other teams, officials and fans - had made it to the finish line to greet the team as they arrived. When crossing the line, the cannon was fired, this time to signify the end of the race.

### **These are the official times of the Arctic Team Challenge 2006:**

**Eastgreenland.com 37:00:07**

**PharmaNord 42:13:41**

**Neriusaaq/Thomas Kristensen 46:53:26**

**Les Moulineaux 51:12:05**

**Intersport Iceland 55:03:52**

**Arctic Ladies 61:44:18**

**Feed the Machine 72:44:25**

**Pihl A/S (shorter route) 59:22:34**

With Feed the Machine safely home, we have a historic moment in Arctic Team Challenge as this is the first race ever where all the teams made it through the official competition.