



How hard is the day to day in this expedition?

Date: April 16, 2009

Location: N88° 15.531' W066 53.278'

Time Traveled: 13 hours

Distance Traveled: 12.3 nautical miles

AM Temperature: -8°F

PM Temperature: -10°F

W/SW wind, 4-10 knots

Calm this PM, <4 knots

CaringBridge Family: [Kirsten Hildebrandt](#)

*John and Tyler are committed to raising funds and awareness for [CaringBridge](#) .*

By: John Huston

{play}images/stories/41609hustond46.mp3{/play}

Audio Transcript:

"We've been skiing for 46 days straight and we didn't plan it that way. We didn't plan to save our rest days or day for bad weather or a storm and we haven't had a storm that's made us think we should stay in the tent and we really had no storm at all. So 46 days of skiing, how hard is it? And this trip, an unsupported ski expedition to the North Pole, has been called the hardest trip on the planet.

Well, answering that question can be done in many ways. First of all, Tyler and I will not likely know how hard of a trip it's been until it's over with. Just like we didn't know how hard it was to live at minus 60° for the first 8 days or so until it was over. And then we started having warmer temperatures and little things became easier and easier as far as managing things in the tent or staying warm and that sort of thing. So once we reach the North Pole and we get out of the groove of skiing every day and the mental focus, our bodies will relax, our minds will relax, and we'll likely be hit by a wall of some sort of exhaustion and we just don't know what we'll feel like, but we will have more perspective on how hard it is.

So, in a lot of ways, it's not going to be defined until it's over. Physically, it's a very hard trip. We work tirelessly to keep our bodies healthy; drinking, eating right, taking care of our feet, sleeping well, and we work very hard to travel at an even steady pace which Tyler and I are matched perfectly for. And that steady pace is easier on our bodies and minds than trying to push too much, and that's all we can do is ski at our steady pace and churn out the miles. So that makes the challenge not easier, but much more manageable mentally as well. Just get in our steady skiing groove and go north. It's kind of a comfort zone there. In a lot of sense the day-to-day life is as hard as we make it. Every day we're presented with different challenges; wind, navigation, skiing conditions, and how we feel, and how we react mentally through those different conditions defines our experience.

So, these days the skiing is very good, the temperatures are warmer, and we still have hard periods during the day, though. If, me in particular, gets dehydrated, or a little too hungry or something like that, or I just go in a mental place that is not as comfortable as I would like it to be. It's not easy to entertain ourselves for 13 hours a day all the time. So if we keep ourselves "care up" and our minds clicking along, then it feels very, very good and we enjoy the skiing. If we get out of that groove, it can seem like we're having a very hard day. So that kind of decides of how hard it is and that aspect of it.

But, all in all, when we're done at the North Pole, we'll have a lot of energy for a bit, most likely 'cause we'll be so excited, and we don't want to define what we're going to feel, but our bodies are a lot thinner. We probably each lost probably 20 to 30 pounds and we're not gonna know how hard of a trip it's been until it's over. But suffice it to say that this definitely is one of the

all-encompassing, most difficult challenges that we've ever undertaken, personally, mentally, and physically. And we feel good about how we're going about it and that makes it a lot less hard feeling. That's exactly what we wanted to do.

We skied for CaringBridge user Kirsten Hildebrandt, who is 3 years old. And February 15th, 2009 she was hospitalized for two months and she's now home. So Kirsten, we are thinking of you and sending you our positive thoughts just as your CaringBridge page allows your friends, family and support network to do so while you are recovering."

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