



Elbrus Race presents traditional and new events

21 May 2009

The festival held from May 6 to 11 was only the second of its kind. This year it attracted over 80 participants from Austria, Australia, Kirghizia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, New Zealand, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine.

The event was held in the Elbrus region, which meant that the altitude factor already presented extreme challenges for the competitors. Some of the competitions brought participants to the highest point in Europe, with high speed races reaching a height of 5642m.

Five separate disciplines were held during the week. They included ski mountaineering, high speed and snow shoes races. The high speed competitions were a tradition in the Soviet Union, once used as a means to choose participants for expeditions to the Himalayas. Snowshoe racing is new to the region and is becoming more popular. The festival is helping the development of the sport.

Extra challenges were presented to competitors when extreme weather caused judges to close the pass to the top of Elbrus during the toughest competition. Poor visibility and snowfall meant most participants had to turn around at the saddle -at 5300m - with only four competitors reaching the summit to finish.

The heavy snowfall also meant that the circuit for another event, set out one day in advance, was almost unrecognisable. But it still went ahead.

The Federation of Mountaineering of Russia, the Russian Emergency Ministry and the government of the Kabardino-Balkaria all gave their support. Sergey Igorievich Berchov, the main judge in the competition, said that the Red Fox Elbrus Race created outstanding interest, which strengthened the spirit of sport and promoted exchanges between professional sportsmen and amateurs.

You can download the official press release, with the details of the winners of each competition [here](#).