

For Immediate Release | Three Photos Attached

Team Type 1 Survives Vehicle Fire At RAAM

Cottonwood, Ariz. – A fire that destroyed Team Type 1's rider transport van threatened to burn up the team's lead Sunday morning in the Arizona desert at the Race Across America (RAAM).

But quick action by the crew kept the eight-rider team going and Team Type 1 led by more than an hour Sunday afternoon at Time Station No. 7 in Cottonwood, Ariz., 437 miles (704 km) into the race.

The fire started beneath the mini-van that hauls the riders and pulls the trailer carrying their Orbea bicycles. It happened when the van's hot catalytic converter came in contact with tall grass on the side of the road while the vehicle was pulled off to make a rider exchange.

Fortunately, no one was hurt. But the van was permanently damaged and a large area of the pavement was scorched.

Team Type 1 General Manager Tom Schuler, who is serving as a crew member for the team during RAAM, said he was amazed by how fast riders and staff responded to the situation.

"They had to put out the fire, disconnect the trailer hitch, reconnect the trailer to another vehicle, move the bikes around and get a new vehicle," Schuler said. "We were really fortunate that we were able to disconnect that trailer from the frame of the burned-out vehicle and move it onto a different van."

As a temporary stop-gap, Team Type 1 and Team Type 2 RAAM manager Dave Eldridge put his utility van into action as the rider vehicle until he was able to secure a new rental. Eldridge is the father of Joe Eldridge, who co-founded Team Type 1 with Phil Southerland in 2004.

In the wake of the fire, RAAM organizers put out a message to the more than 70 other crews following teams or individuals in the transcontinental race. It read, in part:

RAAM wish to extend their appreciation for the quick reaction of the crew to mitigate what could have been a very dangerous event. RAAM is unable to control all aspect of the Race and therefore they cannot take responsibility for unfortunate events that may occur during the Race. Please be aware of your surroundings (especially the dry ground cover in California) and the impact you may have on them during the race.

Follow the progress of Team Type 1 and Team Type 2 during RAAM by going to teamtype1.org. Both squads are providing inspiration to people affected by diabetes around the world.

– TT1 –

Attached photos courtesy: Michael Scholl

TT1_Burned Van.jpg:

The burned undercarriage of the Team Type 1 rider van following a fire early Sunday morning in the Arizona desert.

TT1_Fire Scene.jpg:

The Team Type 1 Orbea bicycles being hauled on a trailer behind the van were not damaged by the fire that destroyed the team's rider van.

TT1_Scorched Pavement.jpg:

The aftermath of the fire that destroyed Team Type 1's rider van: burned grass and scorched pavement.

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