

# Mom takes it to the extreme

■ A stay-at-home mom has prepared for the world's toughest adventure race.

By **ERIC RANSOM**  
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Kim Dunkin is ready for an adventure.

The stay-at-home mom leaves next week for Primal Quest, a 400-mile adventure race starting in Utah.

Dunkin posted on a message board last August that she was interested in joining a team. After contracting an illness following a 50K, she withdrew interest.

But eight weeks ago, a team in need of a fourth member came across Dunkin's post. Dunkin has competed in adventure races for the past three years, but Primal Quest is by far the longest.

She is also racing with three team members she has never met face-to-face. Two are from the Northeast and the other lives in Montana.

"I was kind of a last-minute entry," Dunkin said. "But I'm real excited to finally meet my team at the race."

All of the Primal Quest teams are co-ed, but Dunkin's team is unique for its three women-and-one man makeup.

Dunkin will trek with her team for long-distance running, mountain climbing and other outdoor sports across sleepless days in the wilder-



SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM/RICHARD W. RODRIGUEZ

Kim Dunkin of Fort Worth uses a tree in her back yard to train for the climbing portion of the Primal Quest expedition race.

ness. The team plans to sleep for only 90 minutes a day. The lack of sleep often causes racers to start seeing things in the backcountry.

"We definitely have fun with our hallucinations," team member Elizabeth Moore said. "On the trail, we say it out loud when we see lit houses in the woods and other things. This race will be different because there probably won't be woods — so I don't know what we'll see."

Primal Quest suspended its operations for a year after an Australian racer died during the 2004 race.

While the race holds inher-

ent risks, Dunkin said blisters are her team's constant concern on the trail.

Her solution? Bodyglide on her feet, arms and anywhere that could possibly chafe. She will carry a small roll of duct tape for her feet and to make minor repairs.

"We use duct tape for everything," Dunkin said.

The winning team claims a \$250,000 purse, with a field of 90 teams from 12 countries. Dunkin's team is aiming for a top-20 finish.

"I would be surprised if half the teams finished," team captain Tim Reif said.

Dunkin's training includes a

## IN THE KNOW

### Primal Quest adventure race

- All teams will carry a GPS tracking device.
- Dunkin's family will keep track of her team through the Web site [www.ecoprimalquest.com](http://www.ecoprimalquest.com).
- Eco-Challenge was one of the first shows to televise adventure racing.

5 a.m. wakeup call for a morning run. After an afternoon workout, the evenings are often spent up in a tree. The race includes a 350-foot vertical ascent up a rock face. Dunkin prepares for the climbing portion by doing rope work in a tree in her backyard.

On the weekends, Dunkin kayaks — often paddling around swimming pools while her 4-year-old son, Colby, swims.

"I hope the other kids don't think he's crazy when he says his mom likes to kayak in the neighborhood pools," Dunkin said.

Dunkin goes through her equipment checklist daily, having to compact all her gear into a foot locker.

"I may have to carry my boogie board on the plane," Dunkin said.