

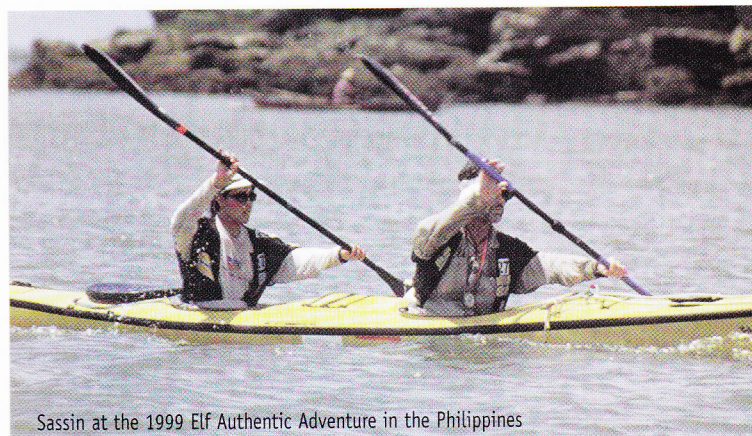


Benincasa

She gets up, dusts off and surveys the damage: tweaked bike—that will bend back. A bone-deep raspberry on her hip—that'll heal. The real issue is the shoulder.



Sassin



Sassin at the 1999 Elf Authentic Adventure in the Philippines

guides and a fireman. The path curves abruptly and Sassin's bike augers into a rut, careening her over the bars and hurtling her into a cement curb. A disgusting, cartilaginous pop breaks the night silence. She gets up, dusts off and surveys the damage: tweaked bike—that will bend back. A bone-deep raspberry on her hip—that'll heal. The real issue is the shoulder: a second degree separation with torn ligaments.

It takes more than torn ligaments to sideline Cathy Sassin, especially when battling for the lead in one of the toughest races on earth. Half crippled from the shoulder injury, Cathy suffers through the rest of the race with the use of only one arm. The cruel irony: the rest of the race is four more continuous days, including three consecutive paddling sections to the finish—whitewater rafting, river kayaking, and ocean kayaking.

Her injury shows on the water, and her team relinquishes the lead for the last time, ending the closest duel in Raid history when they cross the line about two hours after Benincasa and Salomon/Eco-Internet. With this miraculous one-two finish, and so close, the two women have firmly cemented themselves as the ►