



The Amazing Chase

Urban adventure race hits the Windy City | By Jason Erkes

We sit and watch them every night on TV. The endurance-testing, physically straining, mentally challenging reality shows where regular people—people just like you and me—compete in crazy challenges with the hope of winning money, title and, of course, national notoriety. And, if you're like me, some of the challenges look like they would be *fun* too (though I can't say that I'd eat bugs like they do on Fear Factor or live like a castaway on Survivor!).

Wish you could get a real taste of reality TV? You can! This summer up to 2,000 Chicagoans will have the ability to put themselves in the spotlight without the challenges of the gross tasks like eating bugs or, and perhaps worse, the fear of embarrassing themselves on national TV. How?

The world's largest adventure series, City Chase, is coming to Chicago on August 25th and everyday folks—i.e., people like you and me—are invited to compete. There's no casting involved. The only thing standing between you and your Survivor dreams is a small registration fee. Then you're in for a truly adventurous, fun day!

THE CHASE

City Chase is a unique urban adventure—part scavenger hunt and part obstacle course—that requires participants to exhibit teamwork, resourcefulness, determination and the ability to make decisions on the fly as they search for ChasePoints scattered in unknown locations throughout Chi-

cago. Each City Chase event starts with teams of two receiving a clue sheet detailing a variety of physical, intellectual and humorous challenges, designed to push participants outside their comfort zones. To conquer this four to six-hour urban event, two-person teams will run, walk and use public transit to navigate their way throughout the Chicagoland area, while calling family and friends for help, accessing the Internet, and even employing the assistance of total strangers. The first team to complete the required ChasePoints and cross the finish line WINS and will be crowned "Team USA."

City Chase events have been taking place around the world for years now—it started in 2004 in Vancouver, and has since become the largest 'Urban Adventure' race series in the world. There are currently City Chase challenges in Australia, Portugal, France, Spain, Singapore and England—and it has been named the best sporting event in Canada for each of the last two years. But, August 25th

marks the first regular competition to take place in the United States, and Chicago could not be a better backdrop. The winning teams from each of these events will compete in The City Chase World Championship taking place in an undisclosed location.

Now, of course I can't tell you what the challenges for City Chase Chicago will be or where they'll take place, but I'll ask you to think about Chicago from corner to corner and all that it has as a location to offer for this event. If you were standing in the middle of Lincoln Park with limited resources and holding just clues, would you know where to begin? If you had to dig on the beach, find a key that was to a padlock underneath a buoy in Lake Michigan and swim out to get it—would you? Could you fly on a trapeze? Eat a whole deep-dish pizza? (Well, OK, this last one might be doable.) Of course these are just examples and not the actual events.

Some City Chase challenges in other countries have consisted of some pretty wacky things. In Canada,

contestants have faced challenges such as arm wrestling on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, building scarecrows in Toronto, playing underwater hockey in Edmonton, and, pulling rickshaws in Halifax.

In Australia, participants had to pole dance in the middle of a public place, putting on a show for spectators and raising a minimum of \$10 in tips before they could move on to the next event.

Now, there may not be casting directors, TV crews and celebrity endorsements waiting for you at the end of the day, but City Chase might be just the cure to scratch that itch to be on a reality show and, who knows, maybe this event will give you the experience to actually get on one! Registration is now open and teams of two are encouraged to sign up, as space in the competition is very limited. Sign up today and get more information at www.citychase.com. ■

Jason Erkes is the president of Chicago Sport and Social Club, and a member of the Mayor's Fitness Council, Chicago. To sign up for sports leagues, visit www.chicagosocial.com, or call 312.335.9596.