



PRESS RELEASE

Competitors representing 22 nations will participate in The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010

10 November 2010, (Hong Kong): On 17 November 2010, 56 competitors representing 22 nations will board the polar expedition ship, Antarctic Dream, in the Argentinean port of Ushuaia for The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010, the final and ultimate race in the iconic 4 Deserts series of 250km, self-supported, rough-country foot races.

The 2010 event, the fourth edition of the invitation-only race boasts the most competitive field to date.

Ultrarunning superstar Ryan Sandes (28) of South Africa and Sahara Race 2009 champion Paolo Barghini (50) of Italy start as favourites for the race title, in a field that includes five other competitors who have finished in the top 10 in at least one other 4 Deserts event.

In the women's category, Mirjana Pellizzer (47) of Croatia who placed second in the Gobi March 2008, Sahara Race 2008 and Atacama Crossing 2009, and Diana Hogan-Murphy (33) of Ireland who won the Gobi March 2009 and placed third in the Atacama Crossing 2010 are expected to lead the charge.

The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010 also represents the final challenge in a year-long campaign for 9 competitors still hoping to complete the 4 Deserts Grand Slam.

A total of 14 competitors set out from the start line of the Atacama Crossing in March this year with the intention of going on to complete the entire 1000km of the 4 Deserts in one year.

Of the 9 competitors who remain on target, all three women – Linda Quirk (57) of the United States, Lucy Rivers-Bulkeley (33) of the United Kingdom and Samantha Gash (26) of Australia – who began the campaign, are still in the race to become the first woman ever to complete the Grand Slam.

Two competitors are going still one step further and intend to complete all 1250km of RacingThePlanet's events this year: the 4 Deserts series plus the annual roving race. Stan Lee (50) of Canada and Peter Jong (35) of Australia have so far completed the Atacama Crossing (Chile), the Gobi March (China), the Sahara Race (Egypt) and RacingThePlanet: Australia 2010. No athlete has ever completed this feat before.

"The Last Desert this year promises to be an outstanding race. The pressure is very much on Ryan Sandes as he set himself the goal to become the first in the world to win all 4 Deserts as well as being crowned 4 Deserts Champion," said Mary K Gadams, RacingThePlanet's founder and CEO.

She continues, "It's fantastic to see that so many of the Grand Slam competitors have made it this far, and RacingThePlanet is looking forward to welcoming another 33 people into the 4 Deserts Club at the finish line."

The other three 4 Deserts events are characterized by their searing daytime temperatures, which makes the race on the White Continent a whole different challenge for participants.

Ryan Sandes, who is aiming to be the first person to win all of the 4 Deserts, has been training in a specially constructed ice chamber in Cape Town, and Italy's Paolo Barghini took to the tundra



of Greenland for a 10 day training trip as well as the deep snow of the Alps to prepare for the conditions to be faced.

The Last Desert (Antarctica) is another unique event organized by RacingThePlanet, being the only multi-stage footrace to be held on the continent. The 6 stages take place over 7 days, with competitors traveling by ship between course locations that are dictated by the prevailing sea, ice and general weather conditions.

“The terrain and weather conditions can derail the finest athletes, it’s not just about having the legs to run all day, it’s about being able to keep going through knee-deep snow, with a blizzard blowing in your face, at minus 20 degrees Celsius whilst having your feet encased in snowshoes, and your body wrapped in layers of thick Arctic-weather clothing. This is where everything these competitors have learnt in the other 4 Deserts comes into play, but they have to adapt that to a completely new environment.”

Partnering with The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010 providing essential products and services are Intel, the official technology provider, Marmot, the official apparel partner and Expedition Foods, the official freeze-dried food supplier.

For this edition of the event, RacingThePlanet is making a donation in support of Project Kaisei / Ocean Voyages Institute. Project Kaisei, the ocean clean up initiative of Ocean Voyages Institute, is based in Sausalito, California and Hong Kong, and was established to increase the understanding and the scale of marine debris, its impact on the ocean environment, and what solutions can be introduced for both prevention and clean up.

The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010 will be filmed by IMG for their weekly Trans World Sport programme, which is shown in 53 countries around the world. In addition, live website coverage will be provided via satellite at each stage location.

About The Last Desert (Antarctica) 2010 – www.thelastdesert.com

The Last Desert (Antarctica) is held every two years and forms the final race of the iconic 4 Deserts series. Competitors must complete a minimum of two of the other 4 Deserts events to be invited to participate in the race.

The event is a 250km, self-supported foot race with competitors having to carry a mandatory list of equipment, nutrition and water on each stage. The race uses a polar expedition ship as its base, traveling to the different course locations on the Antarctic Peninsula and offshore islands based on the prevailing sea and weather conditions, with competitors transferred from ship to shore by special zodiacs.

The unique challenges of The Last Desert (Antarctica) include having to cope with the severity of the weather conditions that can include gale-force blizzards and temperatures down to -20°C (4°F). Competitors also have to deal with the unpredictability of daily stage lengths and start-times, as the prevailing environmental conditions dictate where and when stages might begin.

About the 4 Deserts – www.4deserts.com

The 4 Deserts is the world’s leading rough-country endurance footrace series. A unique collection of world-class races that take place over 7 days and 250 kilometres in the largest and most forbidding deserts on the planet.

Competitors are challenged to go beyond the limits of their physical and mental endurance.



Racing self-supported in the most inhospitable climates and formidable landscapes, they must carry all their own equipment and food, and are only provided with drinking water and a place in a tent each night to rest.

The series, named again by TIME magazine in 2010 as one of the world's Top 10 endurance competitions, comprises the Atacama Crossing in Chile, the Gobi March in China, the Sahara Race in Egypt and The Last Desert in Antarctica.

About the 4 Deserts Club

Any competitor who completes the 4 Deserts series is inducted into the 4 Deserts Club. An exclusive group of just 48 people have so far become members since 2006.

There are 33 competitors at The Last Desert who will join the club should they complete the race in 2010.

For a list of current members, [click here](#).

About the 4 Deserts Champion

At the end of each edition of The Last Desert (Antarctica) the 4 Deserts Champion is crowned. The award goes to the competitor who has ranked highest in each of the 4 Deserts races they have completed.

For any further information or requests for photos and video footage and competitor introductions please contact shealey@racingtheplanet.com.