

## PRESS RELEASE

### The Last Desert Makes History

[11 November, 2014, Ushuaia]— The Spanish double Olympian Jose Manuel “Chema” Martinez Fernandez and Mexican athlete Isis Breiter have emerged as the 4 Deserts Race Series Champions of 2014, concluding what has been an historic year for the world-renowned race series in the frozen landscape of Antarctica.

Martinez Fernandez claimed victory in The Last Desert this weekend, completing 163.3 kilometers over four days of racing on the islands and mainland of this astonishing southernmost continent. The Spaniard had undertaken the 4 Deserts Grand Slam this year—spanning the Sahara Race (Jordan) in February where he earned second place, followed by the Gobi March (China), the Atacama Crossing (Chile) and The Last Desert (Antarctica)—all of which he won.

“I feel good and enjoyed the moment of finishing this race,” said the 43-year old as he crossed the finish line on Deception Island on Saturday 8 November. “It has been a long year and this year has taught me a lot. The goal of the Grand Slam has been difficult, but I have finally achieved it.”

In the women’s division, Isis Breiter of Mexico claimed gold— finishing 121.6 kilometers over Antarctica’s pristine snows, coming 16<sup>th</sup> place overall and making history as the first Mexican woman to complete the Grand Slam. “I’m happy,” said the 32 year old. “Through these races, I have learned to respect the nature, elements and weather and the basic things in life.”

Of the four teams competing, the Old Misfits emerged as victorious comprising Canadian Stefan Danis, Michael Gilgen of Switzerland, and Greek competitor Anastasios (Ernie) Votis. “We came here to win and we did it,” they said at the finish line. “Having challenging teams against us lifts the experience to a whole new level.”

In addition to the competitors who received podium finishes the Spirit Award was presented to Megan Stewart of New Zealand and the Sportsmanship Etsuji Otsuka of Japan. These awards sum up the entire ethos of the 4 Deserts Race Series.

This year's sixth edition of The Last Desert in the White Continent has been astonishing for its sheer number of new records set. The race saw the largest group of Grand Slammers in history, with 19 successfully finishing the challenge (only 28 people have ever realized the feat before). A total of 43 people also entered the 4 Deserts Club, completing all the races in the series. Ten new nations are now represented, including Linh Huynh, the first Canadian woman to complete The Last Desert; Sanya Kongmunvattana, the first Thai competitor to join the 4 Deserts Club; and Arthur Chu, the first Filipino competitor to join the 4 Deserts Club and complete the Grand Slam.

"This has been a truly historic year for The Last Desert," said 4 Deserts Race Series Founder, Mary Gadams. "We have seen a significant increase in nations represented in the race, which points to the growing popularity of the sport globally. We also have been endlessly inspired by the powerful cast of Grand Slammers throughout the year—and the many charitable causes that have benefited from their efforts."

This year's race in Antarctica was the largest race to date with 69 competitors boarding the Dutch expedition ship, M/V Plancius, on Friday 31 October before returning to Argentinean shores on Tuesday 11 November. While in Antarctica, competitors had four days of spectacular racing from Deception Island to Danko Island and locations on the mainland. The fourth stage had to be cancelled due to high winds and some locations were rerouted due to ice, but the weather proved to hold for the rest of the week. All 69 competitors completed the race.

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**About The Last Desert 2014 (1-11 November) - [www.thelastdesert.com](http://www.thelastdesert.com)**

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

The self-supported footrace is up to 250 kilometers 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 degrees C (4 degrees 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 Race Series - [www.4deserts.com](http://www.4deserts.com)**

The 4 Deserts Race Series is the world's leading endurance footrace series, a unique collection of world-class races that take place over 7 days and 250 kilometers in the largest and most forbidding deserts on the planet.

Competitors must 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, twice named by *TIME* magazine as one of the world's Top 10 endurance competitions, comprises the Atacama Crossing in Chile, Gobi March in China, Sahara Race in Jordan and The Last Desert in Antarctica.

For media and press enquiries including access to photos please email [info@4deserts.com](mailto:info@4deserts.com).