

News Release

Kobe, Japan | June 23rd 2016

Team Europe North ‘Beat the Sun’ to win nature’s toughest challenge

Team Europe North finished in 1st place beating the sun around Mont Blanc by 51 mins. Team Europe South also beat the sun by 12 mins.

On Tuesday 21 June 2016, eight relay teams from across the globe - each featuring three expert and three amateur runners - battled it out in ‘ASICS Beat the Sun’, a unique running relay race around Mont Blanc. All the runners were pushed to their physical and mental limits with just 15 hours, 41 minutes and 35 seconds to cover 140.1 km between sunrise at 05.44h and sunset at 21.25h.

Eight continental teams - featuring 23 countries and 6 continents - were represented: East Asia, Oceania-Pacific, Africa, Europe North, Europe Central and Europe South, plus two teams from the Americas.

Each athlete had prepared rigorously for the most adrenaline-packed race of their lives with the amateur athletes were selected from over 30,000 online applicants following an intensive 16 week training programme. The challenging 140km course was divided into 12 sections with each athlete taking on at least two sections of the course.

In an epic finish cheered on by a huge crowd in Chamonix town centre, Team Europe North – featuring one amateur and one expert each from the UK (Matty Hynes, James Rory MacDonald), Sweden (Jonas Buud, Anna Sofie Nelsson) and the Netherlands (Erben Wennemars, Chris Berendse) - finished the global race in 14:50:00, an unbelievable 51 minutes ahead of the sunset.

Team Europe South were the only other team to beat the sun, finishing ahead of nature’s clock by 12 minutes.

Team Central Europe came in third, but couldn’t quite match the sun for speed around Europe’s highest peak. Team Americas 1, Americas 2, Africa, East Asia and Oceania-Pacific, were all unable to beat the sun, as nature’s toughest challenge took its toll on their athletes’ tired legs as they dealt with the extreme weather conditions including snow, driving rain and wind.

The race lived up to its billing, with wet weather at low level and knee deep snow on high passes further adding to the already demanding terrain. During



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leg three, the athletes were paired up and attached to ropes for safety as they made their way across the snowy peak of Fenêtre de L'Arpette at over 2,600 metres.

The teams faced 9,668 metres of crippling ascent - the equivalent to tackling Mount Everest – and some were on the course for 20 hours on a day when conditions, including snow, driving rain and wind, were against them.

By the time the athletes reached leg 7, the constant rain had meant the proposed route – a harnessed climb up the Ferrata Mont Chetif – was no longer safe, and race organisers were forced to make a last minute change to the route.

East Asia and Oceania-Pacific particularly suffered on the gruelling terrain, and failed to meet the cut off time of 15:40h at Courmayeur, and so were unable to run leg 7, from Courmayeur to Maison Vieille, or leg 8 from Maison Vieille to Ville Des Glaciers.

Africa, East Asia and Oceania-Pacific also missed the cut off of 21:00h at Bellevue and so were unable to run leg 11, from Bellevue to Les Houches,

By missing these cut off times at these points, the three teams were automatically ruled out of being able to beat the sun, but they battled on to complete the challenge all the same.

There were also two injuries to amateur runners, with Cui Yufeng (China) being replaced towards the end of leg 4 by Erlinde Scheps (Netherlands), and Team America's Mariana Bruger (Brazil) being replaced by Vincent Torres Villar (Spain) for the gruelling uphill of leg 7.

Mike Brabant, Global Category Manager Running, ASICS commented: *"ASICS Beat the Sun is about inspiring runners from all over the world and this year's event did just that. We set out to make it Nature's Toughest Challenge, and despite all the elements conspiring against the teams they never gave up. This made Team Europe North's winning performance even more incredible, and we shouldn't forget Team Europe South who also beat the sun. For the six teams that didn't quite make it, everyone at ASICS is incredibly proud of their effort; there's no shame in losing out to the sun - the toughest competitor anyone can face."*

ASICS Beat the Sun continental team placings:

1. Europe North
2. Europe South
3. Europe Central
4. The Americas 1



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5. The Americas 2
6. Africa
7. East Asia
8. Oceania-Pacific

For more information about ASICS Beat the Sun, please visit:

<http://races.asics.com/us/en-us/beatthesun/live-race-updates>

ASICS has also shared images from the event using #ASICSBeatTheSun across its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram social media channels.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1086791794678303/>

<http://www.twitter.com/asicseurope>

<http://www.instagram.com/asicseurope>

Athlete Quotes

James MacDonald, UK amateur runner, Team Europe North commented:

“From applying, to being selected, the long hours training and then finally taking part, ASICS Beat the Sun has been a whirlwind. Running has always been important to me so to be able to share it with some of the best athletes in the world and amazing people has been more than I could have imagined. Today was truly a test against nature, with hills, snow, ice, rain, wind and more put in our way to try and stop us, but working together as a team and knowing we’d done the work pulled us through. It’s been an amazing experience and one I won’t forget.”

Jonas Buud, Swedish expert runner, Team Europe North, added: “I’m really proud to be standing here with my amazing team mates having beaten the Sun. It was an incredibly tough race, with snow on all the high passes and very muddy up hills. To make up the time we did in the second half of the race was a great effort by everyone involved. I took part in the first ever ASICS Beat the Sun in 2014, but this year working with amateurs and helping them achieve this incredible feat is even more fulfilling.”

Notes to editors

Athletes who took part in Beat the Sun

Team Europe North

Experts



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Jonas Buud (Sweden): A former 100km European champion and four time World Championship runner up (2009, 2010, 2012, & 2014). Jonas is competing in his second ASICS Beat the Sun event having been on the winning team in 2014

Matty Hynes (UK): The Middlesbrough born former semi-professional footballer turned long distance runner finished 17th in last year's London Marathon. Having just missed out on qualifying for the 2016 Olympic Games, Matty is hoping to help Team Europe North conquer the ASICS Beat the Sun course.

Erben Wennemars (Netherlands): A former professional speedskater with 8 World champion titles and 2 times bronze medal Olympics. Erben is now a motivational speaker and TV and radio commentator. Since his retirement from speed skating, running has become a way of life.

Amateurs

Anna Sofie Nelsson (Sweden): Anna has a fulltime job as a marketing assistant and also works as a running instructor during her spare time where her goal is to inspire others to find joy in running. Anna believes the best way to explore life is by running it together with her boyfriend.

James Rory MacDonald (UK): James works as an IT consultant and has an active lifestyle that sees him participate in a variety of sports, as well as playing guitar and drums, turning wood with his lathe, and volunteering at his junior parkrun.

Chris Berendse (Netherlands): Exploring life and personal development are Chris' biggest interests in life. This means he likes to try new challenges, visit new places and learn more about himself. He loves to push boundaries whilst doing sports. Chris works as an auditor at an accountancy company and is currently studying to become a chartered accountant.

Team Europe South

Experts

Pablo Villalobos (Spain): A debutant to ASICS Beat the Sun, father of two Pablo combines his training with a part-time job as a mentor to elite level athletes. Having started running at the age of 10 the sport is now a major part of his life. He was fifth in marathon at the Barcelona European Track and Field Championships in 2010, competed in the IAAF Championships Marathon in Daegu and has a marathon personal best of 2:12:21.



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Xavier Chevrier (Italy): Started life as a cross country skier before taking up mountain running. Despite his best efforts in 2015, he finished in the second placed team and will be determined to make amends this year.

Sylvaine Cussot (France): Highly regarded French trail team member 'Sissi' took part in the very first ASICS Beat the Sun in 2014 and knows the French Alps well. She lives in the town of Uzes in the south of France with fellow pro trail runner Emmanuel Gault. Sissi started running when she was 6 and since then it has become a way of life for her.

Amateurs

Juanra Ortega (Spain): Before getting married and becoming a father to his two children, engineer Juanra spent a lot of time in the mountains be it small walks, long runs and even alpine climbing. Running is his 'moment' of the day where he can think as much or as little as he wants. Besides being Juanra's hobby, he is a diabetic and running has proved vital to keeping a good handle on the issue.

Luca Guglielmetti (Italy): Working in the family business, Luca's work takes him all day long and for him it's difficult to find time to train as much as he would like. He has a strong relationship with his family and especially his dad with whom he share's most of his sporting passion with. Apart from running, he also enjoys hiking, alpine skiing, snowboarding, climbing and off road driving.

Francis Marielle (France): Francis has an adventurous spirit. He is an outdoor enthusiast and likes to head out on to the road or into the mountains to cycle, run and hike. He started running in 2013 at a pro/am race, where he saw and was inspired by former Beat the Sun competitor Xavier Thevenard.

Team Europe Central

Experts

Charles Franzke (Germany): An obstacle race specialist, used to taking on Tough Mudder races, and now turning his hand to 'nature's toughest challenge'. Charles works as a personal trainer so knows how to prepare both his body and mind for ASICS Beat the Sun.

Emmanuel Vaudan (Switzerland):

Emmanuel 'Monthey' Vaudan is a Swiss ski mountaineer and long-distance runner. His love of endurance and outdoor sports, ski mountaineering (8 years within the Swiss team), cross country skiing, mountain biking, cycling and trekking will put him in a good place for taking on the varied and extreme terrain of the Beat the Sun course. When he's not competing outdoors, Monthey is a secondary school teacher.



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Tomasz Domzalski (Poland): Tomasz lives in the countryside in Poland and trains every day with his fiancé who is a professional triathlete. Tomasz credits running with giving him the opportunity to meet new people and travel the world.

Amateurs

Dennis Pemsel (Germany): Dennis is 28 years old and close to finishing his degree as a Master of Science in Chemical and Biological Engineering. His hobbies are running, surfing, swimming and photography. Dennis loves to go outdoors with friends, camping and discovering other countries.

Roland Zeindler (Switzerland): Roland a marketing specialist, is married, has two sons and lives in a small village near Zurich in Switzerland. His hobbies include exploring the outdoors and of course running; from 5k to ultra-trails, he's done them all. The most beautiful experience for him is to be in the mountains together with his wife and his kids.

Piotr Myślak (Poland): Piotr has always played sports and when he started to study he focused on basketball, but a broken arm stopped him playing. Since then he turned to running, which is now his life's passion. His aim is to one day win a big race.

Team Americas 1:

Experts

Megan Kimmel (US): Has played a key role in the previous two Beat the Sun challenges, narrowly missing out on victory for her team in 2014 before winning with Team America in 2015. Trail running has been a passion of Megan's for much of her life and uses it as a way to experience nature and explore the world. She lives in the mountains of Colorado and when she's not running, she's skiing or working as a massage therapist.

David Le Porho (Canada): David has represented his country twice in the World Mountain Running Championships and excelled on his Beat the Sun debut last year with a rapid time on the steepest and highest section of the course. Away from running – which he treats as his second job - David is a father to a young daughter, and works in the industrial sector.

Manuel Mendez (Argentina): Manuel uses running as a way of meeting new friends, and to discover natural places. He even met his wife whilst running. He loves spending time outdoors and has been preparing for ASICS Beat the Sun by running and trekking in the mountains of Argentina.



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Amateurs

Benjamin S. Farrell (US): Senior Environmental Engineer Benjamin specialises in water quality. Benjamin's hobbies include swimming, running, biking, endurance sports, kayaking, surfing, snowboarding, hiking, camping, teaching, coaching, and advocating environmental protection. Running is his escape, providing a way to stay stress free and connect with nature. Running allows him to set goals and keep a day to day routine to achieve those goals.

Bill Steinburg (Canada): Bill works as a Communications Manager in Toronto. He commutes nearly 4 hours per day from Barrie, Ontario (100km north) to and from Toronto but insists on sticking to his training despite his daily commute. Bill enjoys listening to old jazz records, reading good fiction, cooking and drinking good beer.

María Florencia Pollola (Argentina): Maria is 32 years old and she organises trail running races. She is a graphic designer and lives with her boyfriend in Capital Federal, though she was born in La Plata. In her free time she chooses to run, sing, read about sports and running.

Team Americas 2:

Experts

Iaza Feitoza (Brazil): A veteran of the last two ASICS Beat the Sun challenges, Iaza has impressed with his determination and trail running technique on some of the toughest sections of the course. When he's not competing in trail races, Iaza is a coach to amateur runners in Rio de Janeiro

Ryan Hall (US): Recently retired US Olympic marathon runner Ryan Hall has a marathon PB of 2:04:58 and makes his debut in ASICS Beat the Sun 2016. Ryan started running at the age of 13 having previously hated it. However running but one day that all changed and my life would never be the same as he developed into one of the best marathoners in the world.

Deena Kastor (US): Deena started to run when she was 11 and went on to achieve bronze in the women's Olympic marathon at Athens 2004 and became America's fastest female marathoner. Deena is a mother of one child, and now retired from professional running. She is currently writing a memoir on the power of optimism in performance - something that will prepare her well for nature's toughest challenge.

Amateurs



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Mariana Brugger (Brazil): Mariana is an electrical engineer who works on the railways in Brazil. She lives with her parents in the same city she was born. Mariana's favourite hobbies are meeting her friends in restaurants, parties and travelling with her family. Her trademark is her infectious smile.

Kelsey Landrum (US): Kelsey is a competitive runner, horse-back rider, and full-time student at Baylor University. Running provides her with freedom and the confidence to know that she can overcome any challenge that she faces.

Sarah Brown (US): Sarah was born and raised in Arizona and loves living there so much she hasn't left. She has an amazing fiancé and has two sweet, big dogs and one cat. Sarah loves spending time with friends and family, reading books, baking from scratch, good wine, and football, both soccer (thanks to her fiancé) and American Football.

Team Africa

Experts

Carla Van Huyssteen (South Africa): Carla is a professional triathlete and first started enjoying the mountains and trail running when she was training for triathlon's and adventure racing at university in 2005. This is Carla's first year at ASICS Beat the Sun and will need plenty of her favourite Espresso's to get her through the longest day of the year.

Givemore Mudzinganyama (Zimbabwe): Givemore was born in the small town of Rusape and is married with one son. Both he and his wife are professional long distance runners and travel the world together competing. ASICS Beat the Sun is the latest, and one of the toughest, races of his career to date.

Duncan Kiptanui (Kenya): This is Duncan's second year at Beat the Sun having made his debut in the competition last year. A road running expert from Kenya with a 1:04 half-marathon and 2:25 marathon time.

Amateurs

Corli Leonard (South Africa): Corli studied Industrial Engineering and works for the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies at Stellenbosch University. She moved to the Western Cape eight years ago to do her Masters and fell in love with the mountains and cannot imagine how her life was before trail running. She absolutely loves wine, good food and coffee.

Tumi Matlou (South Africa): Tumi loves running and breaking boundaries. In her professional life, she is a PR specialist and speaks 5 languages. Her goal is to



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experience racing at the highest level and can't wait to team up with expert runners.

Hadi Selmouni (Algeria): Hadi started running when he was 16 years old. It is a way for him to escape routine and explore. He enjoys pushing himself and also likes to swim and do HIIT to keep in shape.

Team East-Asia Experts

Toru Higashi (Japan): Marathon runner Toru is making his debut in ASICS Beat the Sun. He began competing in track and field at high school before turning his focus to marathons at college. He credits running with giving him many great friends and experiences, and ASICS Beat the Sun will no doubt give him both of these.

Eun Ju Kwon (South Korea): At the age of 21, Eun set the Korean women's marathon record which remained unbroken for 18 years. 2016 is Eun's first time in Chamonix with ASICS Beat the Sun and is hoping to replicate her fast marathon times on the varied terrain of Mont Blanc.

Yadi Guan (China): Yadi is a film producer with a love for trail running and other outdoor sports, including kayaking and scuba diving. Yadi trains with his wife and has been running since the age of 7.

Amateurs

Masaki Sugiyama (Japan): Masaki is a 37 year old Japanese business man who works for an advertising company. Masaki enjoys playing football, golf, running and beer! He loves Hawaii. Running continues to give him the opportunity to make new friends.

Noh Heeseong (South Korea): Noh has his own business, is married and the father of two kids. He loves running after work and participates in marathons and ultra-trail races whenever possible.

Cui Yufeng (China): Cui has been working in TV for four years. She loves running and has a strong interest in other sports. In addition to, Cui likes art, such as piano, singing, drama, photography and more. Her motto is 'love sports, love art, love life!'

Team Oceania-Pacific

Experts

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Anima Sana In Corpore Sano, meaning "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body," is an old Latin phrase from which ASICS is derived and the fundamental platform on which the brand still stands. The company was founded more than 60 years ago by Kihachiro Onitsuka and is now a leading designer and manufacturer of running shoes, as well as, other athletic footwear, apparel and accessories. For more information, visit www.asics.com.



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Russell Dessaix-Chin (Australia): Russell started to run at primary school and won his first cross country race at the age of 10. He now balances running with a full time job as a High School PE Teacher.

Raviin Muthu Kumar (Singapore): Raviin is a final year Psychology student who mixes running with studying. He started running aged 11 and enjoys the thrills and unexpected ups and downs which trail running offers.

Au Ka Lun (Hong Kong): Au Ka Lun is a professional running coach who enjoys taking part in marathon tours all over the world. In addition to running marathons, he also regularly hikes which will be good preparation for the steep terrain of the ASICS Beat the Sun course.

Amateurs

Jessica Sonners (Australia): Jessica has three children that take up the majority of her time. She's often running around taking her kids to swimming, gymnastics and other domestic activities. Then Jessica gets to do the thing she loves – running, occasionally surfing with her husband, bushwalking to the top of the mountains and planning her next running event.

Lance Sum (Singapore): Growing up in family of 4, Lance's parents gave him plenty of opportunities to do what he loves – sport. In addition to running, Lance enjoys weekly soccer sessions with his friends. He also plays badminton, tennis and basketball for fun.

Cheung Wai Lun (Hong Kong): Cheung has been a rowing coach since 2006 and a rowing umpire, football referee and a basketball referee since 2009. Cheung loves sports. He is married and has one child. He met his wife while hiking and he proposed to her at the finish line of his first marathon in 2013.

-Ends-

