

A MAGNificent Return for Expedition Adventure Racing in New Zealand

The new MAGNificent adventure Race in New Zealand was the first Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) Qualifier of 2025 and lived up to its name!

LUMSDEN, CENTRAL OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND, February 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The new MAGNificent adventure Race took place from Jan 22nd to Feb 2nd in New Zealand, and the first Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) Qualifier of 2025 lived up to its name!

Set in the challenging terrain of the Southland region, the 460km course tested teams over 7 days of non-stop expedition racing and included trekking, mountain biking, pack rafting and navigation. Competitors from 9 nations and a worldwide social media audience called the course design, the scenery, the race media and the performances of the teams



MAGNificent winners Team Sardine Racing of New Zealand - Photo Keegan Magness

MAGNIFICENT!

“

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Heidi Muller. CEO ARWS

The race winners were experienced New Zealand team Sardine Racing, who crossed the finish line in Lumsden after 4 days 5 hours and 45 minutes of racing and said; “The MAGNificent lived up to its name, delivering 10/10 endurance, breathtaking views, and brutally rewarding terrain.”

“Every stage pushed the limits of athletes, support crews, media teams, and RDs. The course was relentless to the

very end, and it was inspiring to witness every participant dig deep and redefine what's possible.

“Lining up at the start was both humbling and exhilarating, surrounded by an incredible field of

Kiwi and international teams. Our goal was to move smoothly, stay strong, and see just how far we could go. A few key decisions set us up well, allowing us to push hard to the finish—and somehow, we had an incredible amount of fun doing it!

“This race was an unforgettable ride, a huge achievement, and a privilege to win amongst such a talented field. Expedition Canada here we come!” As winners of an ARWS Qualifier the team (Peter Joynt, Josie Norris, Sam Grummitt and Fergus Frame) won a free place at the next Adventure Racing World Championship in Canada in September.

Heidi Muller, the ARWS CEO, who was assisting at the race, commented, “They are such a strong team and I can’t wait to see how they compete with the world’s best teams in Canada where the terrain and course should suit them. We’ve seen in this race that the standard of racing in New Zealand is world class and to have an ARWS race here again, with a truly international entry, is wonderful to see. We hope the race will encourage more kiwi teams to broaden their horizons and race internationally.”

Such was the strength of the home talent, the only international team to break into the top 10 at The MAGNificent was Bend Racing/4 Hour Fuel (USA), who finished in 9th place, while Team Expedition Canada placed 11th.

Between them in 10th place was the Te Anau Helicopters team, which included the youngest competitor in the race, Louie Burger, aged 17. The schoolboy racer turned 17 a few days before the race start and only had 3 weeks’ notice before standing on the start line of one of the toughest expedition races in the world.

He was not the only youth racer in the top 10 as Team FEAR Youth were second, after leading for



MAGNificent Race Directors Andy and Jason Magness
- Photo Gareth Meyer



Trekking at The MAGNificent race - Image Guillermo Gutierrez

much of the race, and the result may improve their current #7 World Ranking. Unusually, they were not the youngest team in the race as that was another student team, the Taranaki Trailblazers, who started the race with a combined age of 75 for the team of 4. It was a first expedition race for the young team and they finished in an impressive 15th place out of 34 teams after 6 days 11 hours and 43 minutes of racing!

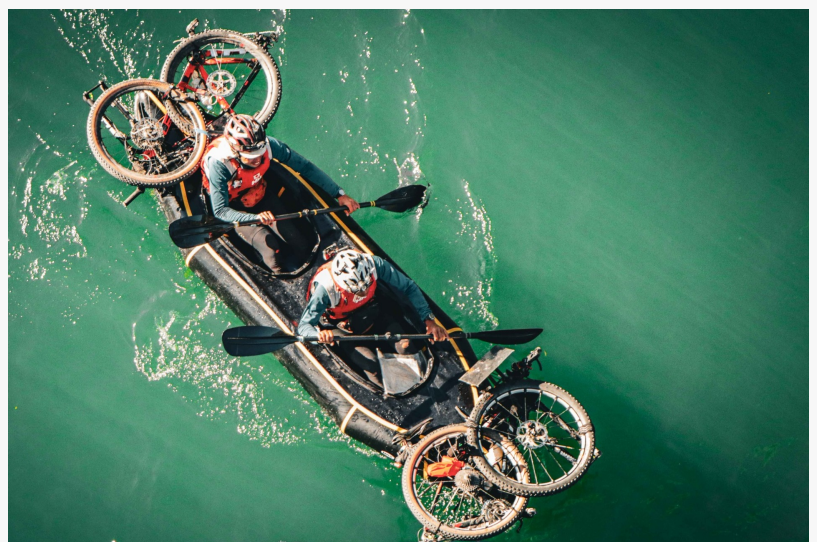
The FEAR Youth team were established and mentored by Andy Magness, one of the two Race Directors, the other being his identical twin brother Jason. They combined their skills and passion for adventure to create the new race, using event organisations they have established on opposite sides of the world.

Andy manages the FEAR Society (Fiordland Endurance and Adventure Race) in Southland and Jason and his wife Chelsey run Bend Racing in Oregon USA. Bend Racing also organises Expedition Oregon. Their combined skills created a course full of variety and strategic choices, which tested the teams and generated plenty of drama for the online audience watching the satellite trackers and continuous social media updates.

The twins are known as the MAGNI (hence the race name) and for them this first race was a dream come true, delivered with the help of a small and dedicated team who worked day and night on logistics, safety and media.

The race was supported by generous sponsors, including Squirt Cycling Products, Rab NZ, Altitude Brewing, CookieTime and TrackMe NZ.

Title sponsors were Meridian Energy who commented, "We're very proud to sponsor this race as it's a partnership based on shared values of sustainability, adventure, and community, and we're thrilled to have some of our friends in the community and Meridian staff involved throughout



Packrafting with bikes at The MAGNificent - Photo Wade Parkinson



Mountain biking at The MAGNificent - Photo Guillermo Gutierrez

the week.”

Jason Magness commented, “It was important to us that the race reflected our values and as a renewable energy company Meridian were an ideal partner. We set the race up with a minimum of transition areas and so teams had no support crews in order to reduce vehicle miles. We also funded a tree planting scheme as a carbon offset for the race. It’s a privilege to race in such wild and beautiful environments, and not one we take for granted.”

He added, “Thank you to all of our supporters, families, racers, sponsors and volunteers for inspiring us and helping us become more MAGNificent this week. We are so happy and thankful that it all happened ... and will happen again next year!”

The dates for the next MAGNificent will be February 28th to March 8th 2026 and registration opens on February 15th at www.themagnificentnz.com.

About the Adventure Racing World Series

The Adventure Racing World Series (ARWS) is a global platform uniting professional adventure races in iconic locations to serve a worldwide community of adventurers and endurance athletes. The series included over 70 events in 2024.

A different race hosts the AR World Championship each year and the series consists of Qualifier, Regional and Stage races in Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Oceania.

The ARWS CEO is South African Businesswoman Heidi Muller, the former Race Director of Expedition Africa. The Adventure World Series was established in 2001 and is a company registered in Bentonville, Arkansas, USA.

More information is on the ARWS website; www.arworldseries.com

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