

Woman Rides A Tricycle To The South Pole



Last holiday season, while most people were cuddling up in a nice warm home, a few were trying to do something no one had done before: peddle their bikes in a race across Antarctica to the South Pole. The three rivals raced to claim the coveted world record and raise cash for the Alzheimer's Society.

Britain's Maria Leijerstam, Spain's Juan Mendez, and America's Daniel Burton began the race in mid-December. They started from the Novo Russian airbase in Eastern Antarctica. Their target destination was the South Pole.

Each competitor had a totally different strategy. Burton and Mendez both decided to ride regular two-wheeled bikes with fat tires. The fat tires would help them ride on top of the snow and keep the bicycle from sinking in. Both of them took a well-known route. Burton had a full team supporting him, while Mendez rode through the treacherous terrain by himself.

35-year-old Leijerstam had a totally different strategy. She peddled across Antarctica on a recumbent tricycle. The tricycle was custom designed for her by UK's Inspired Cycle Engineering. Called the White ICE Cycle, it was far more stable than a regular two-wheeled bike.

The route Leijerstam took was quite a bit shorter than the route her competitors took, but it was much steeper than their route. It had never been attempted before on a bike or a tricycle.

For unknown reasons, Leijerstam began her journey two days after Burton and Mendez started. She carried more than 100 pounds or 45 kilograms of food, campfire fuel, and spare parts for her tricycle.

She braved through temperatures as low as -31 degrees Fahrenheit, or -35 degrees Celsius. She rode through heavy winds and whiteouts. She maneuvered around deep dangerous crevasses. A busted knee added to her misery.

But nothing could stop this determined woman from winning the race. She won the race and made it to the South Pole by peddling 12 hours a day. She averaged between 25 and 35 miles a day. In metric, that's up to 56 kilometers a day.

The trip was expected to take 22 days. This tough adventurer completed it in 10!