



## **DHL supports cyclists on their fundraising tour from London to Tokyo**

- **Ron Rutland and James Owens aim to “Pass It Back” through fundraising journey to Rugby World Cup 2019™**
- **Will cycle 18,500km through 23 countries and over 231 days**
- **Raising funds for ChildFund Pass It Back; World Rugby’s Impact Beyond Partner for Rugby World Cup 2019™**

**Bonn, December 04, 2018:** DHL, the world’s leading express and logistics provider is supporting an epic journey being undertaken ahead of the world’s third largest sporting event, Rugby World Cup 2019™.

Ron Rutland and James Owens are setting off on a remarkable quest: to cycle 18,500 km across Europe and Asia – from London to Tokyo – and arrive just in time for the tournament which is being hosted across Japan. This extreme expedition will take them through 23 countries over 231 days.

The “Race to RWC” starts on 2 February 2019. Departing Twickenham Stadium, London, Ron and James will arrive in Tokyo on 19 September ahead of the first official Rugby World Cup 2019™ match, taking place between Russia and the host Japan on 20 September.

The journey aims to raise significant funds and awareness for ChildFund Pass It Back, a key component of World Rugby’s Impact Beyond program for Rugby World Cup 2019™, and a partner of the tournament’s Official Logistics Partner, DHL.

ChildFund Pass It Back is an innovative sport for development program led by ChildFund in partnership with World Rugby and Asia Rugby. The program delivers an integrated life skills and rugby curriculum for children and young people in disadvantaged communities across Asia. The program’s objectives are to equip children and young people to overcome challenges, inspire positive social change and ‘pass it back’ to their communities.

“We are very excited to have Ron and James riding in support of the ChildFund Pass It Back



program,” said Nigel Spence, CEO for ChildFund Australia. “We believe that every child should have the right to play, learn and grow, and funds raised by ‘Race to RWC’ will mean that children living in some of Asia’s most disadvantaged communities will get the opportunity to take part in ChildFund Pass It Back. This program not only gives young people the chance to play rugby, but the unique curriculum provides them with life-long skills and knowledge.”

As the leading global provider in the logistics industry, DHL is best suited to support Ron and James’ extraordinary expedition through the 23 countries. Ron Rutland, who previously cycled through every African country to arrive for Rugby World Cup 2015, said: “Without DHL’s support in Africa, I’d probably have been six months late for the kick-off of Rugby World Cup 2015!”

DHL Express Global Head of Sponsorship Fiona Taag said, “DHL is excited to be supporting Ron and James’ epic journey. We will be behind them for every kilometer - at official Race to RWC events, at DHL office visits and even having some of our staff cycle alongside them on occasion, in local community rugby matches along the route, and of course supporting the guys with their logistics needs, to ensure they arrive in Tokyo in time for kick off. While we’re looking forward to tracking the kilometers Ron and James cover on their bikes, we’re also excited to see the donation tracker tick over as the global rugby community rallies together to raise much needed funds for ChildFund Pass It Back.”

In an exciting world first, Ron and James will deliver the official match whistle from the home of the Final of RWC 2015, Twickenham Stadium, to Tokyo Stadium for the opening Rugby World Cup 2019™ match between Japan and Russia. DHL will track the match whistle in each of the 23 countries allowing fans to follow this unique countdown to Rugby World Cup 2019™ across DHL Rugby social channels.

### **About the cyclists**

South African **Ron Rutland**, a former amateur rugby player and entrepreneur has previously embarked on two extreme expeditions in his life – a world-first unsupported solo bicycle journey through the entire continent of Africa followed by world-record-breaking hole of golf across untouched landscapes of Mongolia. After Mongolia, Ron worked with the Hong Kong Rugby Union, which exposed the adventurer to more sport for development and the work of so many inspiring rugby projects in Asia. With Rugby World Cup coming to Asia for the very first time,



Ron saw a once-in-a-generation opportunity to “Race to RWC” to raise money and awareness for RWC’s official charity partner, ChildFund Pass It Back.

**James Owens**, Born and raised in Hong Kong, James has both played and coached rugby. He is passionate about using sport as a tool for social change and in 2015 joined ChildFund to work on its rugby for development program, ChildFund Pass It Back. James has been inspired by the program’s commitment to utilising sport to help children and youth in disadvantaged communities, and its success in building the resilience of participants and their ability to face the significant challenges associated with poverty and inequality. Having spent the last 3 years working as a Regional Operations Officer for ChildFund Pass It Back, James is now an Ambassador for the program as well as Ron’s cycling partner during “Race to RWC”.

### **About the events**

DHL and “Race to RWC” will host several events to support ChildFund Pass It Back. Opening with a fundraising dinner at The Stoop in Twickenham, London on Thursday 31 January 2019. At this event, various legends of the rugby world, special guests and World Rugby representatives will be in attendance.

Cycling and rugby enthusiasts are also invited to join Ron and James’ departure from Twickenham Stadium and cycle alongside them and rugby legends to Canterbury. The cycling group will be welcomed at Canterbury Rugby Club to enjoy the Ireland vs England game live on screen that evening. Ron and James are also encouraging the more experienced and adventurous cyclists to cycle 694kms with them for the first five days of “Race to RWC”, taking them from London to Bonn, Germany. All event participants are encouraged to help raise funds for ChildFund Pass It Back.

More information, live tracking from the expedition, donations, registrations and event tickets can all be found at [www.racetorwc.com](http://www.racetorwc.com)

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