

MOUNTAIN ► FAM

Tears of champion

Marc Casal is saying goodbye to the top-level competition and the national team after 12 seasons

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY
@PeriodicAND

Marc Casal officially put an end to the high-level competition last Wednesday. One of the myths of the Andorran Mountaineering Federation (FAM) and mountain running in general, especially in the country, was fired at an event attended by various members of the FAM, along with family and friends of the runner. During his speech, a few minutes after starting it, the Andorran could not hold back the tears of emotion, while explaining that «having a farewell like this is what every runner dreams of. Being able to say goodbye to my people is a privilege».

Casal explained that «I didn't have the same motivation as before, and I think it's a good time to step aside. I don't think it's a sad day, but it's an emotional one». Achieving his best result in an international race, in 2021, in the Vall de Boí, where he was proclaimed UltraTrail World Champion at the Skyrunning Buff Mountain Festival, after completing 68 kilometers, meant the climax to a career that has remained in the elite for 12 years.

The image of Casal biting the gold medal in the Vall de Boí will remain as a historical milestone in the memory and remembrance of many of the country's mountain racing lovers. However, together with his brother, Òscar Casal, the runner has established himself over the years as a reference figure, an image which the runner himself would like to use to «push the young generations who are behind».

The FAM was initially included in the national team, which was presented a few weeks ago. However, «I've been wondering for two or three years if this year would be the last, season after season, and when you see a point where the motivation, the boss, isn't at the same level, you force yourself to make the decision», said Casal, who also wanted to make it clear that «I've always talked to Carlo Ferrari (FAM manager) about the fact that I didn't want to be in only to be if my commitment goes down 100%, I will let it go».

A LIFE OF DEDICATION // Casal, 40 years old, started this sport at the hands of his brother in 2008, training in the mountains of the country and participating in the first races that were organized at the national level. In 2010, he became part of the national team of the FAM and, therefore, began to compete in various international events, achie-



Casal (with cap), accompanied by his family.



Casal with the gold medal of the World Championship.



MARC CASAL
FAM RUNNER

«Having a farewell like this is what every runner dreams of. Being able to say goodbye to my people is a privilege»

«It's a good time to step aside. I don't think it's a sad day, but it's a moment full of emotions»

the most outstanding results

DATE	COMPETITION	POSITION
2010	Vertical Canazei (ITA) - Campionats Món ISF	23/28
2011	Sentiero delle Grigne (ITA) - Sky World Series	14/167
2012	Zegama (ESP) - Sky World Series	36/387
2013	Sky Canazei (ITA) - Campionats Europa ISF	30/483
2014	VK Transvulcania - VK World Series	16
2015	Transalpine (AUT)	1
2016	Yading Sichuan (Xina) - Sky World Series	4
2017	Epic Trail 42K (ESP) - Sky World Series	5/326
2018	Matterhorn Ultraks (SUI) - Sky World Series	2/490
2019	Comapedrosa 21K (AND) - Sky World Series	6/426
2020	La Sportiva Andorra Trail Copa Andorra	1/90
2021	Epic Ultra 68K (ESP) - Campionat Món Ultra ISF	1

ving, year after year, great results.

Throughout this recognition, the Principality has maintained a very high level of competition thanks to its perseverance, dedication and passion for this sport, with very demanding training that has allowed it to position itself, in many of the international competitions, within the world top 10, earning, by its own merits, the definition of elite athlete», according to the president of the FAM, Patrick Frases.

Despite the final point, Casal

said that «it is my dismissal from the professional world, but I will continue to participate in races in Andorra, training when I can and this world will always have a place for me».

Similarly, the federation stated that the doors will remain open for the athlete, who currently rules out holding a position in the entity, to end by recalling that, «beyond results or medals, I bring experiences, moments with the team, as well as making Andorra known around the world». ≡

ACTIVITY REPORT

The number of Caritas beneficiaries decreases by 32% compared to 2020

The agency will open a helpline to combat mental health problems

We are facing a deficit of 133,000 euros due to the reduction of donations in the pandemic



►► A moment from the General Assembly of the annual report of Caritas Andorrana.

A.C.

the figures

468,841 468,841 euros to Caritas Andorrana's social action programs.

601 people currently benefit from the primary care program.

168 donations of textile materials are made to the Rober program.

3,000 users make use of Rober's services to cover basic needs.

34 tons of groceries and basic necessities are collected at the Food Bank.

EL PERIÒDIC ESCALDES-ENGORDANY @PeriodicAND

The total number of Caritas Andorrana beneficiaries has decreased in 2021 to 1,539 people, which is 32% less than in 2020. Of these, 1,256 are residents and 283 are temporary. This year we have increased the number of temporary workers we serve, mainly because at the beginning of the year, many of them were still in the country and had difficulty coping with payments,» said the president of Caritas Andorrana, Amadeu Rocamora. The stabilization of the pandemic and the gradual return to normalcy have been two very influential factors in these results, which have not been so beneficial in other respects. In total, Caritas Andorrana

has allocated 468,841.68 euros to social action programs, a figure slightly lower than in 2020. Revenues have been distributed 41% to Rober, 23% to primary care and a 22.5% in the Food Bank.

Overall, 601 people have made use of the primary care program, while in psychological care, the organization has increased the aid by 36% due to mental health problems and anxiety. In this sense, the coordinator of the organization, Xiqui Bruna, said that «the profile we have encountered is mainly middle-aged people, between 45 and 55 years old who are alone». These, she explained, account for 50% of care and usually have a low-paying job, their social network is concentrated on work and in some cases, if they are not from Andorra, they have also been uprooted

from their home country. With the aim of reducing this problem, the hours of face-to-face psychological care have been increased and an alternative has been developed to make it easier to ask for help through a free telephone line that will be accompanied by a psychologist care to all those who are going through an emotional crisis and don't know who to talk to. The phone number will be 661070 and will take effect from next week. The schedule is not final, but

The Rober program collects 82 tons of second-hand clothes that help a total of 3,000 people.

will be approximately Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For its part, the Rober program, which collects, sorts and distributes textiles, shoes or sheets, among others, has managed to collect 82 tons of second-hand clothes to give it a second life. In addition, 168 donations have been made and more than 3,000 users have benefited from its services. At the same time, the agreements with Mango, Pyrénées and Inditex Andorra as collection points in their establishments have contributed to the visibility of the project.

With regard to the Food Bank, Caritas Andorrana has collected more than 34 tones of groceries and basic necessities, specifically 34,348 kilograms. This action not only helps families, but it is also an action to raise awareness about

food waste», said Bruna. This figure is 15% more than the previous year, and 14% of this aid comes from food surpluses in shopping malls.

Caritas Andorrana also supports families in the current situation of housing and tries to respond to the demands of everyone. One of the complexities of poverty is that there are poor people who do not know how to ask for the help that is already in place,» said Rocamora, and therefore one of the main actions of the association is also to guide and advise these families so that they can discover all the assistance that is available to them.

Finally, the entity ended its activity in 2021 with a deficit of about 133,000 euros. Along these lines, the president of the institution reported that «in the pre-pandemic years we had a surplus that has allowed us to take on this pandemic situation where finding donations was difficult. In addition, if we ask for help from the country, we always get an answer. ≡

Your leading real estate agency in Andorra.

Our experience guarantees results, realtors since 1988.



(+376) 353 424 / (+376) 379 769

(+376) 747 747

laportella@andorra.ad

Casa Nova Olivet 10 · Ordino

www.laportella.ad