

Press release - Chamonix (France), Monday 26 August 2024

The HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc is underway, and the week gets off to a flying start with 3 races!

The long-awaited 21st edition of the HOKA UTMB® Mont-Blanc is well and truly underway. On Monday, the PTL®, the MCC and the TDS® were each launched in quick succession. Here is a summary of what was an intense first day, with weather conditions favouring top results!



PTL start © UTMB - high-res photo

The PTL gets off to a flying start

'Respect nature and take care of yourselves and your fellow runners' was the message from Isabelle Viseux-Poletti, Director of HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc, to the hundreds of runners setting off on the 300km, 25,000m D+ PTL challenge. This particularly intense event takes the teams of 2 to 3 runners on an extraordinary adventure through the Valais, Val d'Aosta and Mont-Blanc regions on unmarked, offpiste routes that require a sense of direction and real alpine experience. While 120 teams set off, once the runners are on the trail they are united by values of mutual support and friendship during the event. The first finishers are expected on Friday afternoon - or maybe sooner if the teams give it their all!

MCC: unifying and intense

At 10:00 this morning 1,000 runners - mainly local residents and volunteers - set off from Martigny-Combe in Switzerland on the 40km route with 2,350m D+ towards Chamonix via the Col de Balme with its magnificent view of the Chamonix peaks.

This year six Team Adaptive athletes took part in the MCC. Team Adaptive is made up of a team of 12 athletes with disabilities or who have suffered from an illness, led by Boris Ghirardi, himself an amputee and keen trailer. Claire Verzaux (FRA - UTMB Index 409), Julien Veysseyre (FRA - UTMB Index 488), Sophie Maigrot(FRA - UTMB Index 449), Franck Derrien (FRA - UTMB Index 687), Pol Makuri Redolad Garcia (ESP - UTMB Index 635) and Vasu Sojitra (USA) all put in fine performances on this technical and demanding course.



Pol Makuri Redolad Garcia, from Team Adaptive © UTMB - high-res photo

In the women's category, the podium was 100% French with Grand-Bornand-born Iris Pessey (FRA - UTMB Index 715) claiming an undisputed victory. She dominated the race, finishing in 4h12'41". The battle for second place was won by Servoz resident Elodie Alexandre (UTMB Index 706), followed 2 minutes later by Savoyard Stéphanie Manivoz (UTMB Index 699).

In the men's field the race was fast and intense with Kevin Vermeulen (FRA - UTMB Index 877) seizing victory under the iconic finishing arch in 3h34'39'', ahead of his compatriot Thomas Butez (FRA - UTMB Index 838), with Switzerland's Cesar Costa (UTMB Index 807) in third place. It was a hotly contested podium with less than 2 minutes separating each of the top three finishers.





MCC winners © UTMB - high-res photo

MCC winners © UTMB - high-res photo

Final warm-up for the TDS

The legendary TDS with its 146km and 9,300m D+ gets underway this evening at 23:50 from Courmayeur. Beautiful, technical and wild are just some of the ways to describe the Trace des Ducs de Savoie. The 1,600 runners will experience a warm welcome in Courmayeur before setting off to discover the unspoilt countryside of the Beaufort region and its picturesque villages: Beaufort, Hauteluce and Les Contamines-Montjoie.

Among the runners to watch in the men's field are: Mark Darbyshire (GBR - UTMB Index 888), winner of the 100M last May at the Ultra-Trail Snowdonia by UTMB®, and Simen Hjalmar Wastlund (SWE - UTMB Index 848), second last year in the TDS and determined to take first place. There's also Spain's Tofol Castanyer(UTMB Index 812), who won the CCC in 2012, and not forgetting France's Simon Gosselin (UTMB Index 874), who has trained with Jim Walmsley among others, and Julien Chorier (UTMB Index 808), who recently came third in the 100k at the Desert RATS Trail Running Festival™ by UTMB®.

The favourites include Austria's Esther Fellhofer (UTMB Index 709), who was DNF last year and is ready to take her revenge and try to make it onto the podium. Other strong contenders include Italy's Elisabetta Negra(UTMB Index 710), Switzerland's Ariane Wilhem (UTMB Index 746), France's Jocelyne Pauly (UTMB Index 725), 3rd in 2018 and 4th in 2022 at the UTMB, and Marie Dohin (UTMB Index 681).

Follow this amazing week from anywhere and for free!

Trail running fans from around the world are invited to follow the sport's greatest elite athletes and the hundreds of other runners taking on the challenge of a lifetime. From August 26 to September 1, coverage of the event is available online, on television, on social media, via major international media, and on site in the Mont-Blanc region. Fans can follow the runners live via LiveTrail, via UTMB Live streaming - with unrivalled and equal coverage across the men's and women's fields - or via the official HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc networks. New for 2024, fans can also watch live from the Fan Experience, located at the heart of the Ultra-Trail® Village.

Highlights on Tuesday August 27, 2024

- 11:00: YCC start, Courmayeur • 14:00: ETC start, Courmayeur
- The first TDS runners will finish at the end of the day

Note to editors

About UTMB[®] World Series

UTMB[®] World Series is the world's ultimate trail-running circuit that unites the sport's biggest stars and passionate runners through the best, leading international events in the most stunning locations. Built on a passion for the mountains with sustainability at its heart, UTMB® World Series gives all trail runners the chance to experience the UTMB® adventure across the world, with events taking place across Asia, Oceania, Europe, Africa, and the Americas. It is the only place where runners can begin their quest to HOKA UTMB® Mont-Blanc, where the prestigious UTMB[®] World Series Finals will be held. Launched in May 2021 through the collaboration between the UTMB Group and The IRONMAN Group, the UTMB World Series circuit brings together many of the best international trail-running events on the planet. For more information, visit https://utmb.world.

About UTMB Group

Since the creation of HOKA UTMB[®] Mont-Blanc in 2003 by a group of passionate friends, UTMB Group has been the driving force behind the development of trail running. The HOKA UTMB[®] Mont-Blanc is the sports pinnacle event, and every year, 10,000 runners earn their place on the start line. UTMB Group also pioneered the LiveTrail® technology, an innovative digital service that supports the management of endurance races. Revered by hundreds of thousands of athletes, UTMB[®] has become a global, premium, and leading brand. In May 2021, UTMB Group partnered with The IRONMAN Group to launch the UTMB® World Series, which brings together many of the best international events on the planet to provide exclusive access to the sport's pinnacle event, HOKA UTMB[®] Mont-Blanc. The UTMB[®] World Series is built on the founding principles of HOKA UTMB[®] Mont-Blanc: surpassing oneself; fair-play; respect for people and the environment; and solidarity. Find out more at https://utmb.world.

UTMB Group media enquiries

presse@utmb.world French enquiries:

Mélanie Godefroy - UTMB World Series PR and Media Manager T: +33 7 89 260 148 <u>International enquiries</u>:

T: +44 7922 140148

Sabina Mollart Rogerson - International press Officer





Are you ready for the UTMB® World Series adventure?

BE PART OF IT AT UTMB.WORLD



GET YOUR GUIDE



