

Press release - Chamonix (France), Thursday 29 August 2024

HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc: The first final of the week was thrilling, with victories by American Eli Hemming and Chinese runner Miao Yao in the OCC

The first final of the 2024 UTMB[®] World Series, the OCC (50K) lived up to expectations with a demanding race that was contested in sunny conditions. While the athletes were engaged in an intense battle typical of trail running, runners preparing for the CCC[®] and the UTMB[®] were fine-tuning their warm-ups.

A frantic race over 57 km and 3,500 m of elevation gain

For the men, a thrilling finish decided the podium contenders. Eli Hemming (USA - UTMB Index 914) took the lead after Trient and gradually widened the gap to win with almost a 10-minute advantage. Despite suffering on the ascent to Flégère, which cast doubt on his ability to maintain the lead, the American dug deep to stay in front and crossed the finish line as the winner in 5h11'48". This final climb, which proved particularly challenging, also determined the positions of Francesco Puppi (ITA - UTMB Index 919) in 5h14'46" and Antonio Martinez Perez (ESP - UTMB Index 912) in 5h17'56".

At the finish arch, Eli Hemming stated: "I am very happy with this victory; it was one of my goals of the season. I managed to fight through a rough patch at Flégère and found the strength to win here in Chamonix."

On the women's side, competition was fierce, with the top ten finishers all arriving within 20 minutes of each other. After a very rapid start, Miao Yao (CHN - UTMB Index 785), Judith Wyder (SUI - UTMB Index 792), and, after a strong comeback, Clémentine Geoffray (FRA - UTMB Index 791) took control of the race. The Chinese runner went on to win an intense OCC in 5h54'03'', followed by the Swiss runner just 6 minutes behind, and the French runner in 6h02'10''.

A few minutes after her arrival, Mia Yao said: "I love this race; it's truly magnificent! It was hot, but I managed my hydration and had planned well with appropriate clothing for these conditions." At 27 years old, after winning the CCC and the OCC, she responded with a smile when asked if she plans to take on the UTMB: "I'll come for my 30th birthday; it will be a beautiful gift."

Team Adaptive also showcased their athletic abilities with the remarkable performances of visually impaired athlete and Frenchman Nicolas Ronget (UTMB Index 419); South African amputee, Travis Warwick (UTMB Index 437); and the team pulling a joëlette [*all-terrain wheelchair*] led by quadriplegic Frenchman Jonathan Naboulet (UTMB Index 312).





The top 3 women of the OCC

The men's OCC podium

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Tomorrow, the 100K and 100M races begin at HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc

The CCC will start at 9 AM in Courmayeur, followed by the iconic UTMB at 6 PM in Chamonix. The two legendary courses will take participants on a journey through an exceptional natural setting around Mont Blanc. Both elite and amateur runners will set their sights on mythical peaks, including Dent du Géant and the Grandes Jorasses. To push their physical and mental limits, each runner can rely on the support of volunteers and spectators as they navigate iconic sections like the Col du Bonhomme, Lac Combal in Italy, and the Grand Col Ferret. The stations and villages on the Tour du Mont-Blanc are ready to welcome trail runners from around the world, including Saint-Gervais, Les Contamines-Montjoie, Courmayeur and Champex-Lac.

With routes that connect France, Italy, and Switzerland, the CCC and the UTMB also symbolise the history of the friendship between the people of the Aosta Valley, Valais and the Mont-Blanc region. These regions share a strong mountain culture and collaborate on joint projects concerning the Mont-Blanc area, dedicated to promoting and protecting the exceptional natural heritage. The HOKA UTMB[®] Mont-Blanc actively contributes to this commitment by implementing concrete actions in all three countries to preserve the trails and respect biodiversity.

An international lineup at the CCC

The CCC start line will feature an international roster with several top contenders. American Adam Peterman (UTMB Index 927) will make his debut at HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc, while his compatriot Hayden Hawks (UTMB Index 915), who has been training all summer in the Chamonix valley, recently placed 3rd in the 100M at the 2024 Western States[™] 100 Endurance Run. New Zealand runner, Daniel Jones (UTMB Index 911), who finished 4th in the 100M at the 2024 Western States[™] 100 Endurance Run, will also be one to watch.

Among the Europeans, Andreas Reiterer (ITA - UTMB Index 907), who suffered a DNF last year, is determined to make a comeback and is in good form after winning the 100K in July at the Eiger Ultra-Trail[™] by UTMB[®]. Swedish runner Petter Engdahl (UTMB Index 918), who holds an impressive time of 9h53' over this course, will also be one to watch.

In the women's field, keep an eye on Hau Ha Thi (CHN - UTMB Index 758), who finished 4th in the CCC last year, and Yuri Yoshizumi (JAP - UTMB Index 746), who took 3rd in the 100M 2023 of Nice Côte d'Azur by UTMB[®]. American runners Emkay Sullivan (UTMB Index 765), 2nd in the 100K 2024 of the HOKA Canyons Endurance Runs[™] by UTMB[®], and Emmiliese Von Avis (USA - UTMB Index 749), winner of the 100K at La Sportiva[®] Lavaredo Ultra Trail[®] by UTMB[®], are also strong favourites. Germany's Rosanna Buchauer, winner of the 100M at the 2024 La Sportiva Lavaredo Ultra Trail by UTMB and 5th at the 2023 World Long Trail Championship, could also surprise on the course.



At the Val Ferret, on the CCC course © UTMB - high-res photo

Legends and challengers at the mythical UTMB

For its 21st edition, the UTMB promises to be as exciting and intense as ever. In the women's lineup, all eyes will be on Katie Schide (USA - UTMB Index 826), winner of the 2022 UTMB and the 2024 Western States 100 Endurance Run. With an impressive track record, French runner Blandine L'Hirondel (UTMB Index 799), a two-time world trail champion in 2019 and 2022, 3rd in the 2023 UTMB, and 2024 European vice-champion, is expected to make a strong showing. Fuzhao Xiang (CHN - UTMB Index 793) will also be one to watch, after finishing 1st in the 100M Translantau by UTMB[®] and 2nd in the 100M at the 2024 Western States 100 Endurance Run, alongside Ruth Croft (NZL - UTMB Index 792), 1st in the 100K 2024 at the Tarawera Ultra-Trail[™] by UTMB[®], who splits her time between Annecy and New Zealand; and Eszter Csillag (HUN - UTMB Index 776), 5th in the UTMB 2022 and looking for redemption after last year's DNF.

A strong challenger for this edition of the race, Manon Bohard Cailler (FRA - UTMB Index 760), 3rd in the 2023 World Long Trail Championships, will start alongside a legend of ultra-running, her father Patrick Bohard (FRA - UTMB Index 785).

In the men's field, American Jim Walmsley (USA - UTMB Index 935) will be looking for a double victory, at both the Western States 100 Endurance Run and the 100M UTMB race at HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc. One of the favourites, Tom Evans (GBR -UTMB Index 917), winner of the 2018 CCC and 3rd in the 2022 UTMB, has been training at high altitude in Tignes all summer. Frenchman Mathieu Blanchard (FRA -UTMB Index 901), who finished 3rd in 2021, 2nd in 2022, and 4th in 2023 at the UTMB, is also determined to reach the top of the podium. Another strong contender for the top spot is Dmitry Mityaev (UTMB Index 913), winner of the 90K at the Marathon du Mont-Blanc at the end of June, 2nd in 2019, and 3rd in 2018 at the TDS[®]. Jiasheng Shen (CHN - UTMB Index 904) will also be a serious contender for the podium, having finished 2nd in the 2023 CCC.

Let's not forget the French baker from Les Deux Alpes Yannick Noel (UTMB Index 882), who boasts a 3rd place finish at the 100M 2024 of La Sportiva Lavaredo Ultra Trail by UTMB, plus a 3rd place in the 2023 TDS.



Lac Combal, on the UTMB course © UTMB - high-res photo

Innovative and concrete solutions developed by HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc to minimise environmental impact

Two aid stations, 100% vegetarian

In 2024, the aid stations will consist of 80% local and sustainable products to limit transportation whilst also promoting the involvement of local stakeholders. This year, HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc is taking a step further by testing two 100% vegetarian aid stations as a pilot project. At Col de Balme, for the Arnouvaz crossings on the CCC and UTMB, charcuterie will be replaced by local Italian products, Farinata, a vegetarian and gluten-free chickpea flatbread.

Eager to involve the trail-running community in these developments, the organisation has gathered their feedback to improve and diversify aid station options while reducing their environmental impact.

Adjusted traffic to preserve residents' quality of life and the environment

The organisation has banned private vehicle access to over 80% of the key points along the route, ensuring that these locations are exclusively accessible via the UTMB Shuttle buses. This restriction aims to preserve the tranquillity of the natural sites and prevent overcrowding, while still ensuring that participants and spectators can follow the event without difficulty.

The CCC and UTMB can be followed in full, live, and online at live.utmb.world as well as on the event's social media channels.

On Friday, August 30, coverage will begin at 8:30 AM CEST with the CCC, followed by the UTMB starting at 5:30 PM.

BEST OF - MCC



BEST OF - TDS

Images

2024 UTMB World Series images: Download on the following link. User: presse@utmb.world Password: PressWorld2024!

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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.

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