



Press release - Chamonix (France), Wednesday 2 April 2025

## HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc: Team Adaptive grows for a more inclusive trail experience

Following a powerful and widely celebrated debut in 2024, Team Adaptive returns to HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc in 2025 with renewed energy and purpose. Building on the momentum and impact of its inaugural year, the initiative continues to champion a bold vision: to shift perceptions of disability in trail running — **so it is seen not as something exceptional, but as integral to the sport.**



©UTMB - highres photo

This year Team Adaptive has grown to welcome **14 extraordinary athletes** from around the world, each with a unique story, background and relationship to disability or illness. United by their love for the trail and **a shared determination to break down prejudice**, these athletes will take on the various races of HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc. More than a symbolic presence, together they **demonstrate that difference in no way diminishes determination, courage, or an ability to achieve the extraordinary**. Among them are returning athletes from the 2024 edition — back with even greater ambition and a fresh set of challenges to conquer.

*“Our vision is simple: one day, we won’t need to explain why Team Adaptive exists. One day, it won’t be about inclusion - it will just be about sport. That day, our mission will be complete,”* said **David Poletti, Head of operations and territory relations, HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc**, and **Boris Ghirardi, Team Adaptive Manager**.

### Unique journeys, one collective adventure

Team Adaptive 2025 brings together athletes living with visible and invisible disabilities — they are united by their passion for pushing boundaries and their love of the trail.

- **ETC**: American **Dani Aravich**, a Paralympian born with agenesis - an absence of - the left forearm, returns to the trails with her characteristic grit and positivity.
- **MCC**: The Spanish duo **Maria Petit** — a blind Catalan athlete who has climbed Kilimanjaro — and **Alberto Estrada**, who lives with Parkinson’s disease and discovered in trail running a powerful way to maintain mobility. They are joined by France’s **Paul Fontaine**, who continues to defy cystic fibrosis through running.
- **QCC**: France’s **Claire Verzaux**, born with agenesis of the right forearm; **Franck Derrien**, an ultra-trail runner with Asperger’s; **Guillaume Pick**, a nature-loving athlete born deaf; **Nicolas Ronget**, a visually impaired physiotherapist from Lyon; and Spanish Paralympian **Pol Makuri Redolad Garcia**, born with hemiparesis, a weakness of one side of the body.
- **CCC**: French athletes **Julien Veyseyre**, a below-knee amputee and 2023 cross-triathlon world champion, and **Jonathan Naboulet**, a quadriplegic following a rugby accident, will be joined by South African **Travis Warwick-Oliver**, a below-knee amputee and founder of the organisation *Rejuvenate SA*.
- **UTMB**: France’s **Fanny Barbara**, who overcame the complete removal of her left lung, will be joined by **Yanis Debaud**, a former rugby player now living with partial paralysis in his right foot due to nerve injury.



©UTMB - highres photo



©UTMB - highres photo

### Why Team Adaptive?

Team Adaptive is part of a long-term commitment to inclusion, equity, and representation at HOKA UTMB Mont-Blanc — in line with the event’s broader mission to reflect the full diversity of the global trail running community.

**This human and sporting adventure is guided by three core principles:**

- **Disability as a natural part of life, not an exception:** By fully integrating athletes with diverse experiences, Team Adaptive proves that disability is not a barrier — simply another way of moving through the world and sharing in the love of the trail.
- **Strength through unity:** At the heart of Team Adaptive lies the power of the collective — solidarity, mutual support, and going beyond limits. Every step counts, but it’s together that the team goes further.
- **Inspiration through action:** Real change happens not in words, but on the trail. By embracing this bold challenge, Team Adaptive shows that passion, courage and determination know no limits — regardless of difference.

*“Less talk, more action. We want to demonstrate that performance and passion have no boundaries,”* said **Boris Ghirardi, Team Manager, also known affectionately as 'Robot Foot'**.

### About Team Adaptive

Launched in 2024, Team Adaptive was created to **reimagine the place and visibility of disabled athletes** in trail running. More than an inclusivity initiative, it champions a sport where **diverse journeys and stories** are not just recognised — but truly celebrated.

In 2025, Team Adaptive returns with fresh energy and inspiration. With **new collaborations, surprise announcements, and meaningful initiatives** set to unfold throughout the year, its mission remains clear: **to help redefine how disability is perceived in trail running**.

### Images

UTMB World Series images can be downloaded [here](#).  
Name: utmbPress  
Password: PressWorld2024

### Note to editors

#### About UTMB® World Series

The UTMB® World Series is the trail running circuit that brings together the best athletes in the sport and amateur runners in top international events held in some of the most beautiful places on the planet. The UTMB® World Series is rooted in a passion for the mountains and respect for the environment and offers trail running enthusiasts the chance to experience the UTMB® adventure across the globe, with events taking place in Asia, Oceania, Europe, Africa and the Americas. This is the way for everyone to start their quest towards the HOKA UTMB® Mont-Blanc, where the UTMB® World Series finals take place. Launched in May 2021 with the collaboration of UTMB Group and The IRONMAN Group, the UTMB® World Series circuit brings together 50 events in 28 countries. 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](mailto:presse@utmb.world)

#### French enquiries:

Keziah Piercy - UTMB World Series PR Manager  
T: +33 6 08 84 58 25

#### International enquiries:

Sabina Mollart Rogerson - International Press Officer  
T: +44 7922 140148

