

The Holy Grail of Trail Running

belongs to France

a data visualization about the Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc

The Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc is considered to be the Holy Grail among trail runners. At the end of August, more than 10,000 runners from over 100 countries arrive in Chamonix to participate in one of the races. The **UTMB** -with a length of 171 kilometers- is the 'star race' of the event. To reach the finish in Chamonix, three countries must be crossed and 10,000 altitude meters must be overcome. Since 2003, when the race was organized for the first time, the percentage of drop-outs exceeds 40%. The home country is best represented among the participants; more than 30% of the runners comes from France.

But France is not just leading in absolute numbers. No less than eight times a Frenchman was on the highest step of the podium. Three times a Francaise won the race. Especially the last years the French (male runners) outperform the rest of the field; the 7 most recent editions were all won by a Frenchman.

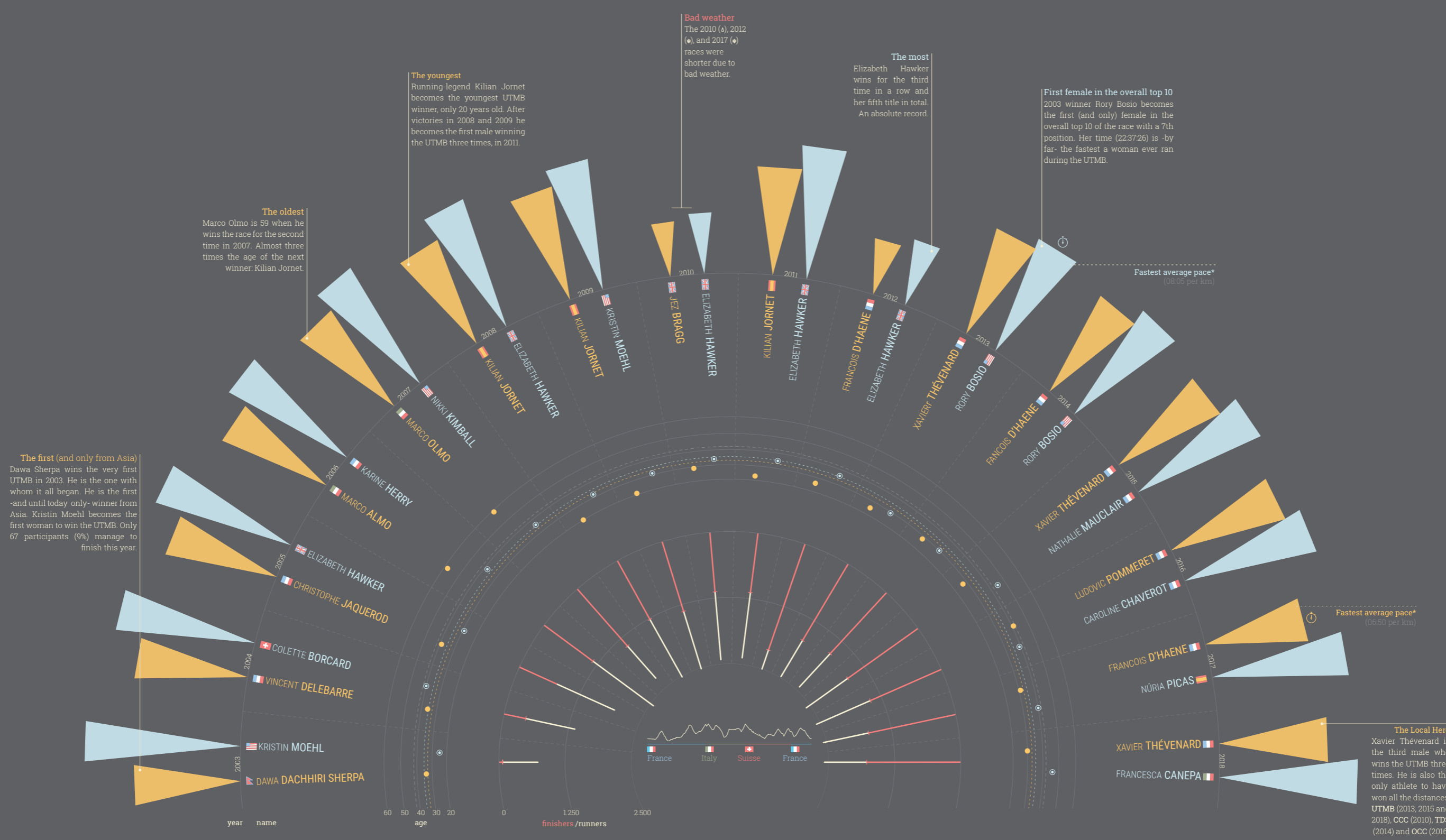
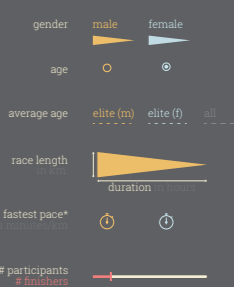
How to read

This visualization shows all the male and female winners of the UTMB from the past 16 years. The distance and duration are visualized in the form of a spike, a subtle reference to the mountains.

Furthermore, the age of the athlete is compared to the average of the other winners of the same sex.

The year in which the record of the fastest average pace is established, is marked with a stopwatch.

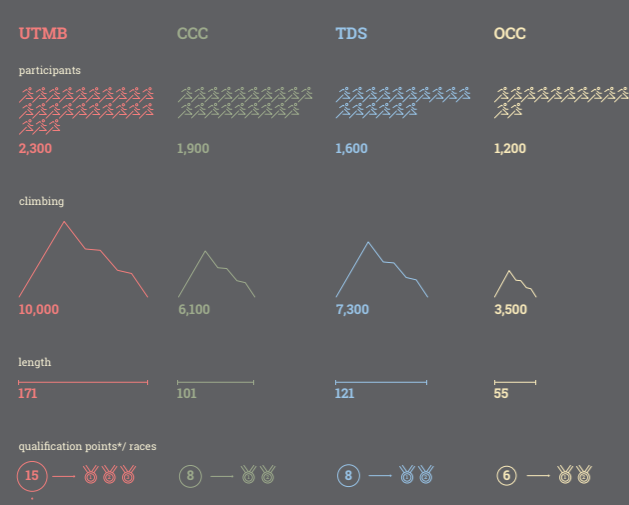
Finally, the number of participants and the number of finishers per year is visualized.



figures

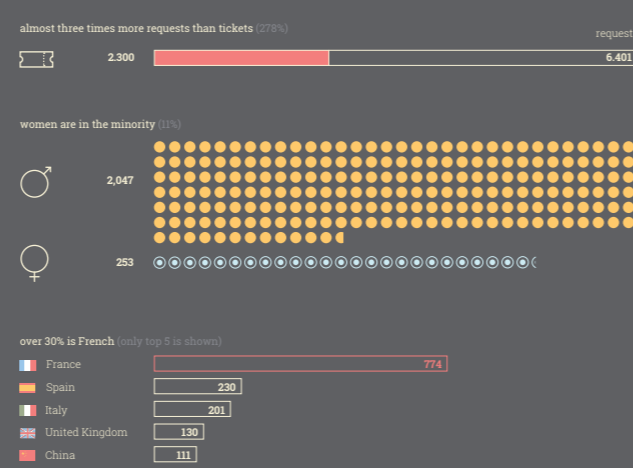
The event at a glance

The UTMB is a huge event with four (main) races. The event is named after the 'star race' of the event: the UTMB. Might be a little confusing... Next to this there are three -more accessible- races, called CCC, TDS en OCC.



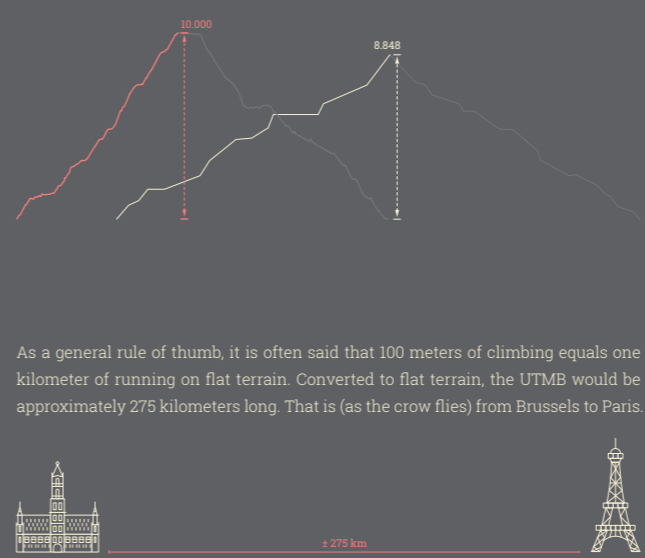
Entering the UTMB

Participating in the UTMB isn't that easy. First you have to qualify. It is necessary to gain a number of points by finishing qualifying races in the past two years. By completing this you are allowed to enter the draw. The first time, the chance for a positive result is less than 50%. Your chances double in the next year. For those who are not selected two years in a row, there is a priority registration in the third year.



Climbing the Mount Everest

The course of today's UTMB is about 171 kilometers long with approximately 10,000 meters of climbing. That is a lot of climbing, more than the ascent of the Mount Everest.



As a general rule of thumb, it is often said that 100 meters of climbing equals one kilometer of running on flat terrain. Converted to flat terrain, the UTMB would be approximately 275 kilometers long. That is (as the crow flies) from Brussels to Paris.

Most victories

The UTMB has a lot of iconic winners. Some even managed to win the race more than once. Elizabeth Hawker, for instance, won the race five times. Also interesting to see is that no less than five times a woman from the United States won the race while a man from the United States never succeeded.

