

NEWS RELEASE

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TOP MOUNTAIN & TRAIL RUNNERS TO COMPETE FOR TITLE OF WORLD CHAMPION

*The best women and men from around the globe will go head-to-head in first-ever event
Prize money indicates the growth and popularity of trail & mountain running*

MONACO, Never in the history of running has there been a unified competition for trail and mountain running to determine the best in the world; until now. Thanks to the continued double-digit growth of trail and mountain running and increased collaboration across the organizations serving this community, a single unified world championship has been created.

On November 11 to 14, 2021 the inaugural [World Mountain & Trail Running Championships](#) will take place in Chiang Mai, Thailand to determine the women and men world champions.

“The beauty of running is that it can be done by anyone anywhere and mountain and trail running is a perfect example of that. We at World Athletics are delighted to support this important step for mountain and trail devotees to establish a combined world championships. This week-long festival, which will bring together runners from every continent in the spirit of goodwill and competition, is a significant milestone in the growth and recognition of this exciting running discipline”, said [World Athletics](#) President [Sebastian Coe](#), who won four Olympic medals during his own running career, including the 1500 meters gold medals at the 1980 and 1984 Olympic Games.

“The opportunity to represent your country at a worldwide competition of the most talented athletes is a childhood dream come true”, expressed Spanish elite athlete and past European Skyrunning Champion [Azara Garcia de los Salmones](#).

“There are few opportunities to measure yourself against the best. These World Championships are a rare chance to race head-to-head in order to determine the ultimate champion”, American elite athlete and top five ITRA world-ranking [Hayden Hawks](#) commented.

Another first, the introduction of prize money for the top 5 men and women in each event, is an indication of the growth and popularity of running on the trails and in the mountains. [International Trail Running Association \(ITRA\)](#) has measured steady annual growth of approximately 12% within trail running and anticipates a spike in growth post pandemic.

Skyrunning and Trail Running World Champion [Luis Alberto Hernando](#) commented, *“I am very excited about the World Championships in November, which is going to bring together the world’s best trail and mountain runners. I would like it to be ‘the race of the year’ and that, like all World Championships in other sports, it will be the race in which all runners want to be.”*

Trail World and Skyrunning European Champion [Ragna Debats](#) added, *“I am very excited about this year’s World Championships. My victory in 2018 at Penyagolosa Trails (Spain) is the most precious achievement of my running career. I expect the highest level of the world’s top athletes to take part in*

the different disciplines being in absolute top shape! I hope I find myself amongst them to be fighting for the victory!”

Trail running elite athlete [Pere Aurell](#) adds, “*At home I have my partner, Ragna, a world champion. I have wanted to run a World Championship for years, to face the best at their best. I think this year the time has come, I am physically and psychologically prepared so let’s go for it!*”

The multi-day event will feature competitive short and long trail, a vertical uphill and classic mountain races including those for seniors and juniors.

“The trail and mountain running community is very tight knit and share the same core values around the globe: integrity, humility, fair play, respect and solidarity”, expresses [Bob Crowley](#), president of [International Trail Running Association \(ITRA\)](#). *“Everyone coming together as a global community in Thailand in November is going to be very meaningful. The world’s best athletes and tens of thousands of fellow runners and families from every continent; a comeback celebration for all!”*

“We’ve been talking about this kind of event for decades, said [Dale Garland](#), [Hardrock 100](#) race director from Colorado, USA. Finally, our community has come together to host a celebration of our sport, culture and competition. I can’t wait!”

Situated 700km north of Bangkok, on the banks of the Ping River, Chiang Mai is an ideal setting for hosting the inaugural competition thanks to its mountainous surroundings, growing reputation for outdoors mass sporting events and ample capacity to accommodate the large expected numbers of participants, supporters and families.

Trail elite runner, [Pau Capell](#) added, *“To launch a single World Championship with different distances is the best way to give value to the most competitive runners. If things go well, there will be an impact in terms of media and federations, which in the end is what we, as elite athletes, are seeking. Capell continues, “I hope to compete in Thailand, where I have never been and what better experience than to close a year with a World Championship?”*

U.S. Olympic Marathon trials and mountain running elite [Rachel Drake](#) declared, *“The opportunity to bring together the world mountain and trail running championships and reconnect with the global trail running community is what we have all been waiting for, especially post pandemic. I’m really looking forward to this happening!”*

In addition to attracting the best elite trail and mountain runners, there will be opportunities for all runners to test themselves on the same courses, exhibitions, seminars, education, film premieres and more. The collaboration of [World Athletics \(WA\)](#), [World Mountain Running Association \(WMRA\)](#), [International Trail Running Association \(ITRA\)](#) and [International Association of Ultrarunning \(IAU\)](#) provides athletes, brands, athletics associations, media and fans of the sport with clear “must be there” event on the global calendar of this burgeoning segment of running.

“There is only one ‘first’ and I don’t want to miss the chance to make history. It’s a memory I’ll cherish throughout my career and life”, remarked China’s elite ultra trail running pro [Fuzhao Xiang](#).

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