THE CRYSTAL PEAK

2026 · THIRD EDITION

Voting Guidelines

The Crystal Peak Awards 2026 · Best Trail Running Athletes of the Year
Presented by TrailRunAdvisor & UpHill Notes

WHO VOTES	WHAT	HOW	RESULTS
Media, federations, industry professionals, race directors and athletes, from around the world	Four athlete categories for women and men, plus Special Achievement of the Year	One online ballot per voter, one choice per category, with a data-based shortlist as a guide	Share of votes per category. Individual votes stay confidential

1 Eligibility

- Only athletes who took part in a race recognised by the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) or the International Skyrunning Federation (ISF) during the 2026 calendar year can be voted for.
- **Best Young Athlete (U23):** athletes aged 18 to 23. Open to any athlete who is at least 18 years old on race day and does not turn 24 before 31 December 2026. Athletes who turn 23 during 2026 are eligible.
- **Special Achievement of the Year:** open to any athlete, team, event or project, for an outstanding moment or performance in trail running during 2026. The ITRA / ISF race rule does not apply to this category.

2 Categories

Awards are given to the best woman and the best man in each of the following categories:

CATEGORY	WOMEN	MEN
Best Young Athlete · U23 (18–23 years old)	●	●
Best Athlete · Short Distance / Skyrunning	●	●
Best Athlete · Medium Distance	●	●
Best Athlete · Long Distance / Ultra	●	●
Special Achievement of the Year	One award, open to all	

Short Distance / Skyrunning and Medium Distance cover races up to marathon distance. Long Distance / Ultra covers races longer than marathon distance. Voters choose the distance category that matches the athlete's main results in 2026.

3 How the Shortlist Is Built NEW IN 2026

The suggested nominees on the voting form come from a data-based shortlist prepared by UpHill Notes from 2026 race results. It is a guide for voters, not a ranking: the jury decides.

STEP 1 · THE DATA

Every 2026 result with a UTMB score is taken into account: more than 3,500 results for women and men.

STEP 2 · ONE CATEGORY PER RESULT

Each result is assigned to one UTMB Index distance category, and athletes are ranked separately in each category:

SHORTLIST CATEGORY	UTMB INDEX CATEGORY	MINIMUM RESULTS
Short	20K	3 races
Medium	50K	3 races
Long	100K and 100M	2 races

UTMB Index categories take both distance and elevation into account, so they match the award categories closely but not exactly. Voters still choose the category that best fits each athlete's main 2026 results.

STEP 3 · FOUR NUMBERS PER ATHLETE

	MEASURE	WHAT IT SHOWS
1	**Peak**	The athlete's best single race score in the category.
2	**Season**	The average of the athlete's best 3 race scores (best 2 in Long).
3	**Field**	Who the athlete beat: place × field strength, averaged over the best 3 results (best 2 in Long). A 5th place in a deep field can earn more points than a win in a weak field.
4	**Index**	The athlete's current UTMB Index in that category.

STEP 4 · THE PODIUM SCORE

PODIUM SCORE

25% Peak + 35% Season + 25% Field + 15% Index

Season carries the most weight, so a consistent year counts for more than one outstanding race.

STEP 5 · THE SHORTLIST

- **Short, Medium and Long:** the 10 athletes with the highest Podium Score, for women and for men.
- **Best Young Athlete (U23):** the 7 eligible U23 athletes with the highest Podium Score, for women and for men. The U23 pool is smaller, so the shortlist is shorter. The U23 shortlist was prepared with the support of TrailLevel.
- On the voting form, shortlisted athletes appear in random order, by name only, with no scores and no rank. Voters can vote for any eligible athlete, on or off the shortlist.

4 Voting Panel

The voting panel is made up of members from all over the world:

- Specialist trail running media: TV broadcasters, magazines, online platforms and podcasts
- National trail running and skyrunning federations
- Industry professionals
- Race directors of major trail running events NEW IN 2026
- Athletes, who vote for each other NEW IN 2026

5 Voting Process

- Voting takes place through an online voting form. Each voter receives the link and the voting dates by invitation.
- One vote per entity: each media outlet, federation, company or event casts one ballot, and each athlete casts one ballot.
- In each category, the voter selects one athlete. A category can be left blank.
- The form lists suggested nominees from the shortlist described in section 3. They are a reference only and the list is not exhaustive. Voters are free to vote for any eligible athlete.
- Athletes cannot vote for themselves.

6 Conflict of Interest

To keep the vote fair and impartial, voters must disclose any direct affiliation with an athlete or team eligible for an award. Direct affiliations include, but are not limited to:

- Employment by, or financial ties to, an athlete, their team or their sponsors
- A personal relationship with an eligible athlete
- For race directors: a contractual or financial link between their event and an athlete

A voter with a conflict of interest may still vote, but must not vote for the athlete or team they are affiliated with. TrailRunAdvisor and UpHill Notes may review disclosed conflicts and, where needed to keep the vote fair, ask a voter to abstain in specific categories.

7 Confidentiality

- All votes are confidential. Individual ballots are never published and never shared.
- Only aggregated results are published.
- Voters are asked not to share how they voted before the official announcement.

8 Results

- Results are announced online on a dedicated TrailRunAdvisor webpage and shared across social networks. The announcement date is communicated to voters in advance.
- For each category, the top three places are published with each athlete's share of the votes. The number of voters, countries and continents represented is also published.
- Athletes with the same number of votes share the same place.

9 Communication Rules

- Voters are encouraged to share and promote the results on their own platforms, but this is entirely optional. Each voter decides whether to communicate about the results.
- Any communication about the awards must use the full name, **The Crystal Peak Awards**, and acknowledge TrailRunAdvisor and UpHill Notes as the organisers.
- Visual assets such as logos and banners are provided and must be used according to the guidelines supplied with them.

10 Looking Ahead

After opening the vote to race directors and athletes in 2026, TrailRunAdvisor and UpHill Notes will keep widening the panel and improving the process. Questions and suggestions are welcome at **info@trailrunadvisor.com**.