

An Exceptional, Tailor-Made Performance

The Traversée de la Meije, July 8, 2026, in 4h 11' 22"

by Nicolas Jean

At just 27 years old, Nicolas Jean has set a new benchmark performance by establishing a new record on the Traversée de la Meije. He shaved nearly 27 minutes off the time achieved by Benjamin Védrynes in 2020 (4h 38min)—a benchmark that many believed to be untouchable. In fact, when Nicolas first envisioned this project, he recalled his initial reaction upon discovering Benjamin's time, which had stunned the mountain community: *"Benjamin, you're going to keep this record for a while!*

Nobody will even want to try to beat you; it's a lost cause..."



Traversée de la Meije

Genesis

After a demanding day of scouting with Arthur Sordet followed by two days of recovery, he set off on **July 8 at 8:30 AM** from the church in La Grave.

"The bad sensations at the start began to shift. According to an unusual physiological law, the higher I climb, the better I feel. At the Brèche de la Meije, I'm slightly ahead of schedule, and I start to believe. From trail runner to mountaineer, from village to peaks, from snow to rock, I stay focused. Run, walk, climb!"

_ NICOLAS JEAN

Throughout this solo traverse, Nicolas relied solely on limited assistance: Sandrine, the hut warden at the Refuge du Promontoire, provided him with water, and Arthur Sordet accompanied him during the final kilometers between the Pont des Brebis and the church in La Grave. During the scouting phase, no fixed ropes were installed, and no gear was left in place to facilitate the challenge or save time. True to alpine ethics—one of his core values—Nicolas completed his entire project in a minimalist style. He carried all of his own gear, rope, and water.

Much more than a new benchmark time, this performance illustrates the remarkable versatility of the young mountain guide from the Ubaye valley. On an itinerary this demanding and long (22 km), one must be capable of seamlessly transitioning between trail running, glacier travel, rock climbing and downclimbing, rappelling, and long, technical descents.

Upon finishing, Nicolas savored the moment:

"I am happy to bring to fruition a project about which I had real doubts. It is a magnificent journey where you have to be fast and highly technical, both in alpine and rock progression as well as on the descents. I admit that the 3,000 meters of negative vertical drop worried me a bit. I know I can still improve on certain aspects and perhaps do even a little better!"



@ArthurSordet

SEE NICOLAS ATHLETE PROFILE >

The crossing in detail

Figures and equipment

FIGURES

22 km
3,000 m D+ (Positive elevation gain)
Start: 8:30 AM
Brèche de la Meije: 10:03 AM
Grand Pic Summit: 11:03 AM
Doigt de Dieu Summit: 11:26 AM
Arrival at the church: 12:41 PM
Total Time: 4h 11min 22s
Mountaineering Grade: D- (Difficile inférieur / Slightly Difficult)
Snow/Ice Slope: 45° max

**NICOLAS HAS BEEN COLLABORATING
WITH SIMOND SINCE 2025**

HER GEAR FOR THE ASCENT

Kiprun Race Light Shoes

AVAILABLE >

Sprint Helmet (older version)

AVAILABLE >

Harness (Simond Sprint prototype)

Carabiners

AVAILABLE >

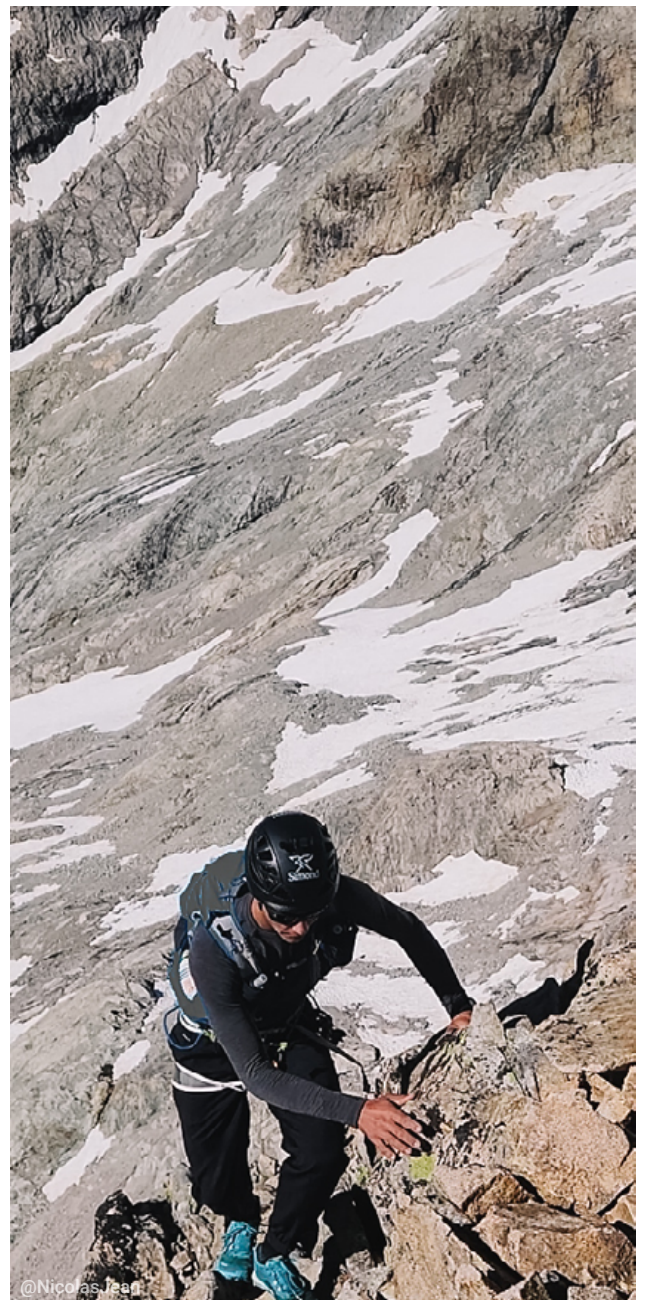
50m cord + Escaper

Kiprun 5L Trail Vest

AVAILABLE >

1L of water (refilled once)

4 energy gels



Interview

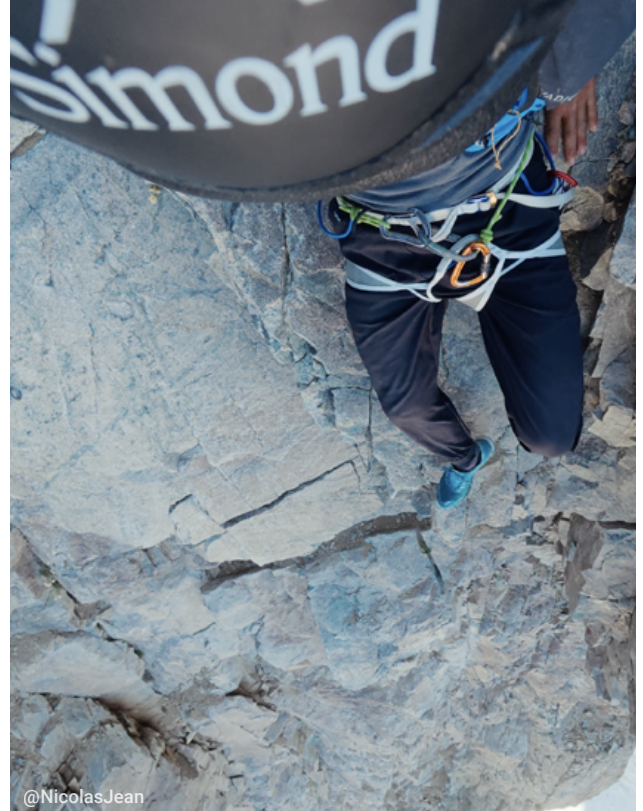
Nicolas' Words

What was your motivation for going after this record on this traverse?

"Records have always been part of the history of mountaineering. Today, the limits are simply being pushed a little further. What draws me is this intoxicating mix of altitude and speed. I love physical exertion. I love going up peaks, and even more so, climbing them. I love going fast, moving from one valley to another, and looking back up at a summit from the valley floor just a few short hours later. I love that feeling of freedom, and also that of bounding from rock to rock like a chamois. For this project, there was also the beauty of the route. It's a magnificent, varied climb with exceptional rock. For me, the Voie Normale is the most beautiful route on the south face, which counts about thirty others. I quite simply had a blast."

_ NICOLAS JEAN

Just a few days after his record on the Meije Orientale (3,891 m), a few weeks after the end of a winter season during which he logged over forty first ski descents on steep slopes, and less than a year after the first ascent of Jannu East, Nicolas confirms that he can do it all in the mountains—and do it fast. It is a way of taking versatility to its highest level by pushing the boundaries between disciplines. Mountaineering, steep skiing, climbing, trail running: he excels everywhere with the same ease, the same high standards, and the same quest for freedom.



Testimony

A Historic and Mythical Traverse



Mathéo Jacquemoud—member of the Avant-Garde Simond team, mountain guide, instructor at the ENSA, and author of three alpine records this winter—shared his thoughts:

"Simply inspiring! This performance resonates with me deeply, because a traverse completed at such a speed requires an exceptional level in every domain: physical, mental, but above all, technical. There is no room for error. This is very, very high level. Respect!"

_ MATHÉO JACQUEMOUD



The Traversée de la Meije is considered one of the most beautiful mountaineering routes in the Alps. A truly legendary itinerary, it connects the Refuge du Promontoire to the Refuge de l'Aigle by crossing the Grand Pic de la Meije (3,983 m), largely following the historic line of the first ascent in 1877. This exceptionally aesthetic ridge climb then leads mountaineers to the Doigt de Dieu (3,973 m), concluding a true journey suspended between sky and rock. For a well-trained, roped party, this traverse is generally completed over two or even three days, most often relying on the La Grave cable car for the approach.

[SEE MATHÉO ATHLETE PROFILE >](#)



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A global multi-specialist sports brand catering to everyone from beginners to elite athletes, DECATHLON is an innovative designer of sporting goods for all levels of practice. With 101,100 teammates and 1,817 stores worldwide, DECATHLON and its teams have been working since 1976 toward a continuous ambition: making the benefits of sport truly accessible to all.

About Simond

Based in Chamonix since 1860, Simond is an iconic brand in the field of mountain equipment. Specializing in mountaineering, climbing, trekking, and ski touring, Simond has a long-standing expertise in metalwork. In 2008, Simond joined the Decathlon group. The brand continues to design and manufacture all of its metal products (ice axes, crampons, carabiners) in its Chamonix factory. Its design teams apply their expertise to enhance equipment durability, ensuring technical and reliable products for demanding users.



PRESS CONTACTS

For press enquiries, interviews
or product testing:

SIMOND

PRESS RELATIONS MANAGER
PAULINE PONTE
PRESS@SIMOND.COM
+33 (0)6 60 28 35 48

PRESS RELATIONS
ANNE GERY
ANNEGERY@ORANGE.FR
+33 (0)6 12 03 68 95

DECATHLON

INTERNATIONAL.MEDIA@DECATHLON.COM