

Western States 100 winner will not defend title

By Sam McManis, Sacramento Bee

Kilian Jornet, the defending Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run champion and widely considered the world's best ultrarunner, has dropped out of Saturday's race from Squaw Valley to Auburn following the death of a close friend in a climbing accident in the Alps.

Jornet had been traversing Mount Blanc with three-time world mountaineering champion Stephane Brosse over the weekend when a ridge collapse claimed Brosse's life. The two apparently were close to completing "La Grande Traversee," a speed ascent and descent when the ridge gave way, according to a statement issued by the pair's sponsor, Team Salomon.

"It was on the last part, just before going downhill, that the ridge they were on collapsed, taking Stephane within its spilling," the statement read. "Kilian remained helpless whilst waiting for the rescue team."

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