



## Vendée Globe History

The Vendée Globe is the hardest and most famous sailing race in the world. Nicknamed the Everest of the Seas, it involves sailing around the world alone, without stopping and without assistance. The race sets sail and finishes in Les Sables d'Olonne in Brittany after rounding the three legendary capes: The Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Cape Leeuwin in Southern Australia and the infamous Cape Horn at the tip of South America.

Participants have to sail twice in the North and South Atlantic – on the way down and on the way back – and sail around Antarctica by crossing the Indian Ocean and the huge Pacific. Like other major international sporting events such as the Olympics, and World Cup, it takes place every four years since first starting in 1989.

This merciless event, which tests human endeavor and endurance as well as the technological aspects of boats, is raced on 60-foot monohulls (18.28 m), IMOCA boats. The Vendée Globe has been won by some very famous sailors, Titouan Lamazou, Alain Gautier, Christophe Auguin, Vincent Riou and François Gabart. Only one sailor has won it twice: Michel Desjoyeaux in 2001 and 2009. The race record is held by François Gabart, who finished after 78 days. The eighth Vendée Globe will begin from Les Sables d'Olonne on Sunday 6th November 2016.

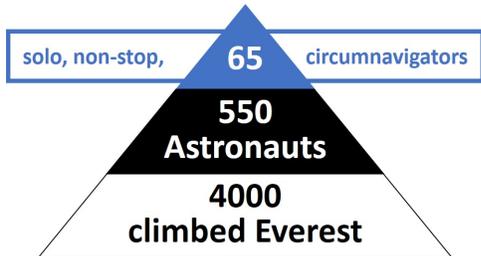
The Vendée Globe is still the only non-stop solo round the world race without assistance. The event was created in the spirit of the Golden Globe, which was in 1968 the first non-stop solo round the world race via the three capes - Good Hope, Leeuwin and the Horn. Out of the nine pioneers who set sail in 1968, only one made it back to Falmouth on 6th April 1969 after 313 days at sea, the British sailor, Robin Knox-Johnston. Sir Robin Knox-Johnston thus became the first sailor to sail alone around the world without stopping.

Twenty years later, the French sailor Philippe Jeantot, who had twice won the BOC Challenge (the solo round the world race with stopovers), came up with the idea of a new solo round the world race, but this time a non-stop race. The Globe Challenge was born, and this later this became the Vendée Globe. On 26th November 1989, thirteen skippers set sail from les Sables d'Olonne and only seven finished the race.

Since then there have been seven more races with 138 skipper participating and only 71 crossing the finish line after facing icy cold conditions, mountainous waves and leaden skies. Only one sailor has won it twice: Michel Desjoyeaux, in 2001 and 2009. The race record is held by François Gabart with a time of 78 days.

More information is available on the Vendee Globe website: [vendeeglobe.org](http://vendeeglobe.org)

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