

In Europe, it's easier to be an Olympic medalist than a unicorn founder

According to recent research from Antler, there are four times more Olympic medallists in Europe than unicorn founders, and even when you exclude the Winter Olympics, there are still more medalists than unicorn founders in Europe.

Temps de lecture : minute

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However, the opposite is true in the US, where there are twice as many unicorn founders as Olympic medalists. The research, which was conducted by Antler, the most active early-stage VC firm in Europe, compares Olympic athletes who have won medals in the last 20 years against unicorn founders in the ten largest European countries by population.

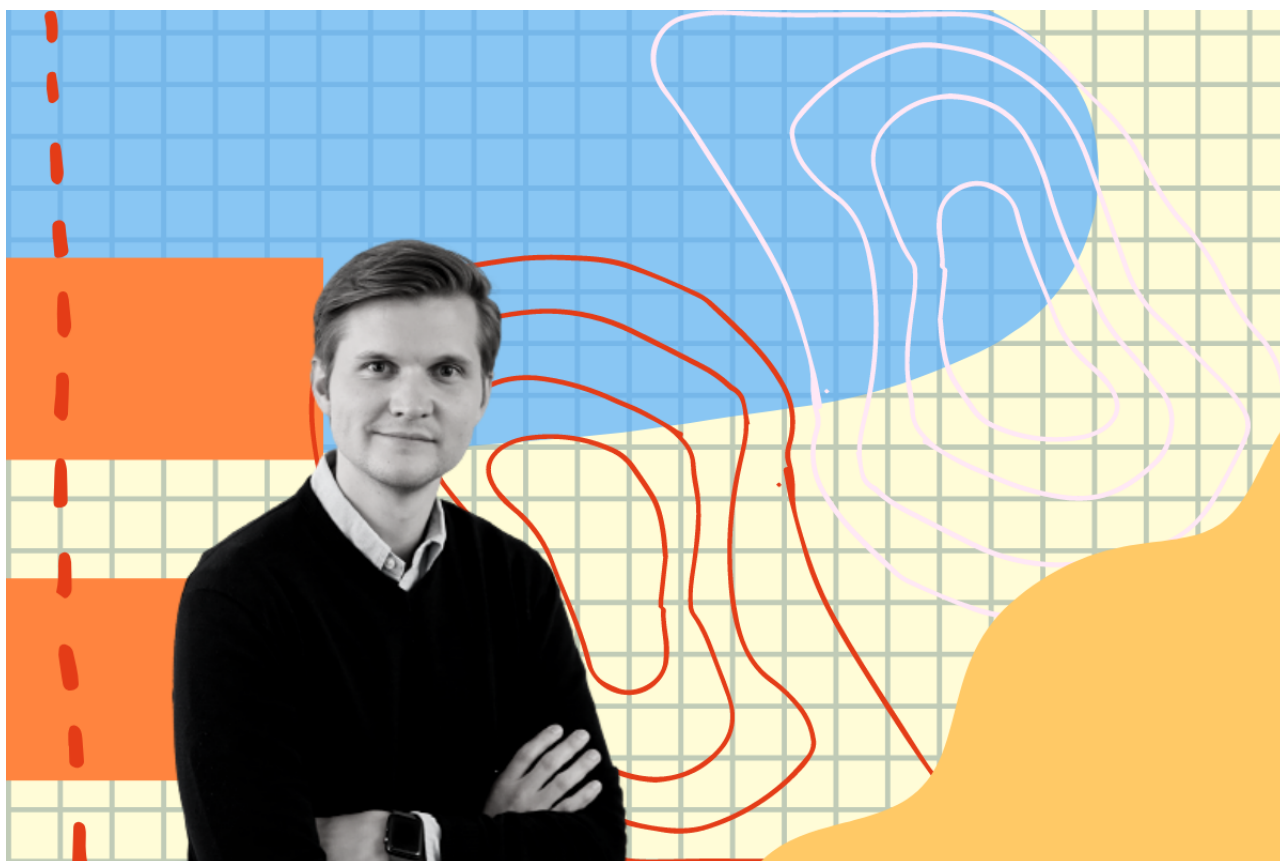
The three most successful European countries in the Olympics are Great Britain, France and Germany. There are 2x more Olympic medal winners in Great Britain than unicorn founders, 3.5x more in Germany and 5x more in France.

There are more (1.2x) Olympic gold medalists in Europe than there are unicorn founders. You are more likely to have an Olympic gold medal than be a unicorn founder in Germany (1.4x), France (1.3x) and the Netherlands (3.3x).

The only major European countries that have more unicorn founders than Olympic gold medal winners are Great Britain and Sweden.

These findings are in stark contrast to the US, where the data suggests you are now more likely to build a unicorn than become an Olympic medalist. The USA has won 689 Olympic medals in the last 20 years, whilst it has built 641 tech unicorns in the same period. The number of American unicorn founders is just less than half (-40%) the number of Olympic medalists.

"As the Paris Olympics start, we are in awe of the dedication and preparation that it takes for athletes to get there. Our research is a reminder of how rare it is to build a true outlier company and how being a great founder almost without exception requires hard work, stamina and sacrifice, just like the most high performing athlete." Alan Poensgen, Partner at Antler.



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