



## 2026 HERO UCI CROSS-COUNTRY MARATHON WORLD CUP: LET THE INTERNATIONAL GAMES BEGIN – IN CALPE

The HERO Costa Blanca presented by Millennium Luxury Properties will take place in Calpe on 21 February 2026, opening the second edition of the mountain bike cross-country marathon series. The Press Conference was held in the Spanish city and featured local authorities and athletes to present the circuit's novelties.

The race will be broadcast on TV across four continents.

Hashtag: #HERO #UCImountainbike #HEROWorldCup #HEROUCIMarathonWorldCup #GripyourDestiny

Calpe, Spain – 3 February 2026 – This morning's press conference was held at the Casa Nova in Calpe and marked the official start of the second edition of the international **HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup**. The race will be held in Calpe, on the Costa Blanca, on Saturday, 21 February 2026.

At the end of February, the Elite of mountain bike cross-country marathon (XCM) will compete against the backdrop of turquoise and azure waters and sun-kissed beaches and cliffs.

A number of athletes, as well as the mayors of the five municipalities which will see the cyclists race across their towns, took part in the press conference to share their impressions on the start of the 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup with the press. The series opener in Calpe is not only a high-performance sports event but also showcases the local area.

### THREE JAM-PACKED DAYS

Calpe is ready to welcome **160 Elite and Master License cyclists from 26 countries and 4 continents – as well as amateur cyclists** – who will test their mettle on the two race tracks: the 82-km one boasting 2,700 elevation gain (hm) and the 50-km course boasting 1,400 hm. The race routes will take cyclists across the Costa Blanca's breathtaking landscapes – the single tracks spanning Calpe, Benissa, and the other municipalities will test the athletes' physical fitness as well as their cycling technique.

The programme kicks off in the **HERO Village**, with stands welcoming athletes and fans alike on Thursday, 19 February between 14:00 and 17:00, and on Friday, 20 February between 10:00 and 17:00. The official presentation of the 2026 UCI XCM Teams will also take place on Friday, at 15:30. This will be followed by the **HERO Race Talk** at 16:00 – high-level athletes will take the floor to share their impressions in the run-up to the first round of the series.

On Saturday, the Elite Men will kick off at 8:00 from Parc de la Creativitat, followed by the Elite Women at 8:10. The Master cyclists will head off at 8:20 and can choose between the Elite "long" course or the 50-km alternative boasting 1,400 hm – which could be the right choice for those who still haven't trained their legs enough in February for long distances.

The first Elite Men are set to return to **Calpe** around 12:00, followed by the Elite Women and Master cyclists. The event will be rounded off at 13:00 by the Award Ceremony to celebrate the winners of the HERO Costa Blanca.

The organisers have thought of everything – so, while the athletes race to cross the finish line on the climbs of the Costa Blanca, the HEROes of the future will 'compete' on the **HERO Kids Costa Blanca** on **Saturday, 21 February** at **9:30**. A great opportunity to show the beauty of mountain biking to even the youngest in the crowd.

## THE STARS OF THE RACE

**David Valero Serrano** – also an accomplished cross-country Olympic (XCO) athlete with a bronze medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, silver at the 2022 UCI Mountain Bike World Championships, and winner of an XCO UCI World Cup round as well as countless national races – took part in the press conference. He was joined by **Luis Martinez**, two-time Spanish XCM Under 23 Champion. Both Spaniards represent the **Klimatiza Orbea Team**. **Raul Rodriguez**, three-time Spanish Champion, also participated.

"Local HERO" **Sophie Johnson** – European XCM Master Champion and winner of the 2025 Südtirol Dolomites 2025 in Italy in the Master Licence category – completed the 4-strong press team.

These athletes are just some of the faces that will take part in the first round of the international series on 21 February in Calpe.

## THE HERO'S WORLDWIDE BROADCASTING

An international event has to reach beyond the Spanish borders. Which is why the most important **sports TV broadcasters and digital platforms** will broadcast the **HERO Costa Blanca presented by Millennium Luxury Properties** in **four continents**. If you want to follow the race live, visit the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup's official website at [www.heroucimarathonworldcup.com/](http://www.heroucimarathonworldcup.com/) and the UCI Youtube channel: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCloqTh1nPpW13LCntQglS-Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCloqTh1nPpW13LCntQglS-Q)

**Mireia Ripoll** – City Council of Tourism Calpe: "We're very pleased you've come here to see the HERO UCI Marathon World Cup, and would like to thank you for doing so. Calpe is a very beautiful destination that joins the beach to the mountains. I hope you'll enjoy all our mountains and the Mincho".

**Gerhard Vanzi** oversees the 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup. He says: "Creating an event such as the HERO Costa Blanca would not have been possible without the effort and support of the local authorities. I would therefore like to thank, also on behalf

of the UCI, the local administrations represented today by the mayors of Calpe, Benissa, Senija, Lliber, and Xalò. I would also like to thank Millenium Luxury Properties, the event's title sponsor, for its practical support. We firmly believe this team work will lead to great results."

**Óscar Martos** Founder and CEO of Ocuri Investments (Millennium Luxury Properties): "The arrival of the HERO UCI Cross-Country Marathon World Cup to Costa Blanca marks an important milestone for the region and for international cycling. Being part of the first Spanish stage of the 2026 circuit is a privilege, as it highlights Costa Blanca as a world-class destination for sport, tourism and lifestyle. HERO Costa Blanca brings together elite competition, spectacular landscapes and global visibility in a truly unique way."

**Natalie Fischer** - Team Extremadura Ecopilas: "To race my first XCM World Cup in Spain is very special, particularly in Calpe, an area which I know very well and where I have spent a lot of time training and have also raced. I'm used to its rough and demanding terrain, full of rocky and sketchy trails. Its superb weather, variety of routes and diverse cycling community make it a unique destination for any cycling discipline all year round."

**David Valero Serrano** - Klimatiza Orbea Team: "Being able to compete in a marathon and have a World Cup is extremely important to me. At the end of the day, it's a fixed and global event, which will help the discipline grow and increase the number of followers. What's more, the great thing about the HERO World Cup is that both professionals and amateurs can take part in an XCM World Cup race. I've set an ambitious goal this year: I'll try to compete to qualify in the overall HERO World Cup ranking. The truth is that I'm lucky that two of the stages are being held in Spain. The World Cup's start in Calpe really motivates me and I'm really thrilled about it. I'm not very familiar with the terrain, although I do know it from training and watching races. The final stage, La Tramun, is a brand-new race with a huge impact. I've always wanted to compete in it and, if all goes well, this year my wish will come true. I've competed in XCO races both in Italy and Elba and, while I haven't run a marathon there, I think it will contribute considerably to grow in the discipline. The truth is that I'm very happy and thrilled that this XCM World Cup is taking place because I think it will represent a big leap forward for the discipline."

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## **Organising Committee**

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