



THE WORLD'S MTB ELITE FLOCKS TO THE 2026 HERO UCI MARATHON WORLD CUP'S FIRST ROUND

The HERO Costa Blanca presented by Millennium Luxury Properties will take place on 21 February 2026 in Spain and mark the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup's second edition. Expectations are high for what will be the circuit's first round – long-distance pros will be vying for the very first HERO UCI Marathon World Cup qualifying points. The world's best athletes in the UCI ranking will flock to the starting line – an extraordinary line-up which promises to be an incredible race featuring two World Cup runners-up, two European champions, and a whopping 13 national champions.

Hashtag: #HERO #HEROUCIMarathonWorldCup #HEROWorldCup #GripyourDestiny

The countdown to the **2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup** has started: the circuit will kick off at the **HERO Costa Blanca presented by Millennium Luxury Properties**. The first round stretches between Calpe and Benissa and will take place on **Saturday, 21 February**. Over **180 Elite and Master License athletes, hailing from 26 countries across four continents** are expected at the starting line in Calpe – and they'll be joined by **amateur cyclists**, too. The athletes will be able to test their limits on the 82-km and 2,700m or the 50km and 1,400m routes, wending their way across the stunning Costa Blanca. These tracks will challenge the participant's physical fitness as well as their cycling skills on single tracks developing across Calpe, Benissa, and the other surrounding municipalities.

THE START GRID

Crowned champions of the circuit's first edition in 2025 in Spain just five months ago, both **Andreas Seewald** from Germany, representing Singer KTM Racing, and **Rosa Van Doorn** from

The Netherlands, will return to the starting line in February. Their race to victory won't be a walk in the park, as they will have to face some serious competition – **Wout Alleman** from Belgium, Italian cyclist **Samuele Porro** representing Klimatiza Orbea Team as well as fellow Italian **Gioele De Cosmo** who, together with **Leo Paez**, represents Lee Cougan Basso Factory Racing. They will all put up a good fight to obtain the first position in the Men Elite's ranking. In the Elite Women category, the reigning champion will have to watch her back, for Adelheid Morath from Germany and Sandra Mairhofer from Italy – both representing Lee Cougan Basso Factory Racing – will have their eyes on the top spot. They will be joined by **Paula Gorycka-Kurmann** from Poland, **Lejla Njemčević** from Bosnia, **Claudia Peretti** from Italy, and **Natalia Fischer** representing Extremadura Ecopilas. The challenge won't end there, as we have new people joining the circuit for the first time. **David Valero** from Spain, representing Klimatiza Orbea Team, ten-time Spanish champion and bronze medallist at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, and **Anna Weinbeer** from KTM Spada powered by Brenta Brakes, 2025 XCM World Champion runner-up. Sophie Johnson – European Master champion – will also show us what she's made of, as will Alexandre Lladó, winner of the 2025 Master Licence edition.

Besides the strong turnout of professional cyclists, Calpe will also welcome hundreds of amateurs who will use the race on the Costa Blanca as their dress rehearsal for the 2026 season.

THE HERO'S INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

Such an international event must be seen beyond Spain. Which is why the most important **sports TV broadcasters and digital platforms** will broadcast the feats of the cyclists competing in the **HERO Costa Blanca presented by Millennium Luxury Properties** across **four continents**. Live broadcasting will be available between **11:00 and 13:00 (CET)** on the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup's official website: **www.heroucimarathonworldcup.com**

The event will feature three, thrilling days of events in the **HERO Village**, which will welcome athletes and fans on Friday, 20 February, between 10:00 and 17:00. On the same day, at 15:30, the **official presentation of the 2026 UCI XCM Teams** will take place on the main stage, followed by the **HERO Race Talk** at 16:00. During the Talk, high-level athletes the likes of **Natalia Fischer** (Extremadura Ecopilas) and **David Valero** (Klimatiza Orbea Team) from Spain, **Hannah Otto** from the USA, and **Leo Paez** from Colombia (Lee Cougan Basso Factory Racing) will share their impressions and feelings in the run-up to the race.

The event will be LIVE streamed on the World Cup's Instagram profile on Friday, 20 February, at 16:00: [instagram.com/heroucimarathonworldcup](https://www.instagram.com/heroucimarathonworldcup)

On Saturday, the Elite Men will start at 8:00 at the Parc de la Creativitat, followed by the Elite Women at 8:10. The Master category will kick off at 8:20, while the amateurs will start at 8:30.

The first men from the Elite category should cross the finish line at 12:00 in **Calpe**, followed by the Elite Women, and the Master category. The event will end at 13:00 with the Prize Giving Ceremony for the winners of the HERO Costa Blanca.

While the adults compete on the Costa Blanca's climbs, the Organising Committee has come up with an event for the future HEROes: the **HERO Kids Costa Blanca**. This event will be held on **Saturday, 21 February**, at **9:30** – so that even the youngest cyclist can experience the beauty that is mountain biking.

HERO UCI MARATHON WORLD CUP

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