



THE 2026 HERO UCI CROSS-COUNTRY MARATHON WORLD CUP: ALLEMAN AND WEINBEER WIN THE FIRST ROUND ON SPAIN'S COSTA BLANCA

Set against a spectacular Mediterranean backdrop, today's HERO Costa Blanca, presented by Millennium Luxury Properties, kicks off the 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup. Belgium's Wout Alleman and Switzerland's Anna Weinbeer were declared the winners of the 82 km Calpe-Benissa race, taking home the first points from this year's UCI World Cup racing series.

Hashtags: #HERO #HEROWorldCup #HEROUCIMarathonWorldCup #UCImountainbike #GripyourDestiny

Calpe-Benissa, Spain – Saturday, 21 February 2026 – The UCI World Cup's long-distance mountain biking series, **2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup**, officially got underway today with the **HERO Costa Blanca, presented by Millennium Luxury Properties.**

In total, 173 Elite and Master License riders from **24 countries** lined up for the 82-km race (2,700 hm), and are also competing in the **2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup**. As in every other race in the series, they were joined on the Calpe track by numerous amateur riders under the Spanish sun.

The first round of the Elite Men's race was led by German Lukas Baum until his back derailleur stopped working properly, forcing him into damage-limitation mode. This paved the way for fellow countryman (and 2025 Marathon World Cup defending champion) Andreas Seewald, representing Singer KTM Racing, to take the lead in what proved to be a great comeback after sitting at fifth place around the twenty-kilometre mark. A comeback was also on the cards for David Valero, who staged a slow but steady rally from eighth to third

place. The Spaniard ended a fruitful XCO career on a high with a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics before officially joining the marathon racing community to represent Klimatiza Orbea Team.

But the real king of the day was Wout Alleman. Holding podium position for most of the race, the Belgian seized the opportunity when Andreas Seewald suffered a puncture, overtaking him just before the finish line in 3:41:44, a time that exceeded even the organisers' expectations.

"I'm really happy! It's the first World Cup race of the season, so winning today was really important," Wout Alleman said after the race, "I've been in Spain for a few weeks. I came intentionally early just to train properly, so I knew the track around the Calpe area really well. I'm happy with my fitness, this is an important victory that shows that hard work in the preparation phase has paid off." If today's performance is anything to go by, then the Belgian is likely to have a great season as he tries to beat his second place in the **2025 HERO UCI Marathon World Cup**.

Andreas Seewald from the Singer KTM Racing team was runner up, finishing just a minute behind. Coming in at 3:42:49, he congratulated the winner when he crossed the finish line. Spaniard **David Valero**, representing Klimatiza Orbea, trailed by 1:46', taking third place on the podium. All eyes were on him in front of a home crowd.

The first kilometres of the Women's Elite race saw Swiss rider Anna Weinbeer, KTM SPADA Powered by Brenta Brakes' newest recruit, break away from the group, repeating her performance in the Black Forest ULTRA Bike Marathon in July last year. Racing in the Amateurs category, she made the best absolute time of all women in the race. Then, just as today, it was a one-woman race to the end for the Swiss athlete, while the real battle for second position took place behind her between Dutch Rosa van Doorn (winner of the 2025 World Cup), Spaniard Natalia Fischer representing Extremadura Ecopilas and Pole Paula Gorycka Kurmann. The three of them battled it out, with Spaniard Fischer emerging victorious.

And so, somewhat unexpectedly (although perhaps not entirely) Switzerland's **Anna Weinbeer**, representing KTM SPADA Powered by Brenta Brakes, took the top spot, finishing the challenging Calpe-Benissa track in 4:27:05.

"I'm extremely pleased, I'm at a point where I feel really happy and on top form," said winner Anna Weinbeer, "everything is new to me this year, my team, bike, working group, races and sponsors. I'm in a completely different place now and I'm really happy with this first round. Nevertheless, the heat really got to me in the second half of the race, but I'm pleased I got the better of it."

Joining her on the women's podium was Natalia Fischer, who lagged behind by 3:37', and Dutch Rosa van Doorn in third place with a time of 04:31:31.

The Master License category also saw drama, with first place in the men's race going to Spaniard **Xavier Calaf Garcia**, and Brit **Sophie Johnson** winning the women's race.

But before closing the first chapter of the **2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup**, Gerhard Vanzi, chairman of 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup, said, "We are delighted with how today has unfolded. We kicked off a new event, which involved a great deal of organisation and planning, and we really appreciate the support

of the authorities and our local partners. And, although we're still months away, we're always thinking about the next race: the Capoliveri Legend Cup, which was a great success last year."

The winners of the first round of the **2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup** took to the podium in the leader's jersey, which will be worn again in less than three months on Elba, where the second round, the Capoliveri Legend Cup, takes place on the 9th of May 2026.

ELITE MEN'S RANKING

1.	ALLEMAN Wout	BEL		03:41:44
2.	SEEWALD Andreas	GER	SINGER KTM RACING	03:42:49 +00:01:05
3.	VALERO David	ESP	KLIMATIZA ORBEA TEAM	03:43:30 +00:01:46
4.	LUKASIK Krzysztof	POL		3:45:47 +00:04:03
5.	BAUM Lukas	GER		03:45:5 +00:04:13
6.	EVENSEN-LIE Eskil	NOR	METALLURGICA VENETA	03:46:30 +00:04:46
7.	SAMPARISI Nicolas	ITA	KTM SPADA	03:47:53 +00:06:09
8.	EGGER Georg	GER		03:47:54 +00:06:10
9.	STOSEK Martin	CZE		03:48:02 +00:06:18
10.	GORIA Stefano	ITA		3:48:04 +00:06:20

ELITE WOMEN'S RANKING

1.	WEINBEER Anna	SUI	KTM SPADA	04:27:05
2.	FISCHER Natalia	ESP	EXTREMADURA ECOPILAS	04:30:42 +00:03:37
3.	VAN DOORN Rosa	NED		04:31:31 +00:04:26
4.	GORYCKA KURMANN P	POL		04:43:03 +00:15:58
5.	OTTO Rae Hannah	USA		04:45:03 +00:17:58
6.	NJEMCEVIC Lejla	BIH		04:46:18 +00:19:13
7.	MAIRHOFER Sandra	ITA	LEECOUGAN BASSO FACTORY	04:48:38 +00:21:33
8.	SOMMER Clara	AUT		04:50:58 +00:23:53
9.	PERETTI Claudia	ITA		04:54:36 +00:27:31
10.	BAUMANN Chrystelle	SUI		04:57:03 +00:29:58

The final overall rankings can be seen at: www.heroucimathonworldcup.com

For more information see: heroucimathonworldcup.com

Organising committee

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