



UNSTOPPABLE PERETTI, VALERO'S VICTORY: WHAT A SHOW AT THE HERO SÜDTIROL DOLOMITES!

The toughest mountain bike marathon in the world was won by David Valero Serrano from Spain, who beat former road cycling athlete Diego Rosa, and Tim Smeenge, to the finish line. Claudia Peretti, from Italy, was in the lead from the very first moment right until she won, followed by Rosa Van Doorn, from The Netherlands, and Paula Gorycka Kurmann from Poland. Cyclists from 54 countries kicked off from the start line. After the 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup's fourth round, Anna Weinbeer from Switzerland – who arrived fourth today – still leads the overall ranking, with David Valero Serrano leading in the Men's category.

Hashtag: #HERO #HEROUCIMarathonWorldCup #GripyourDestiny

Selva Val Gardena, 13 June 2026 – The world's top mountain bike marathon cyclists cycled up to the 2026 **HERO Südtirol Dolomites** start line this morning. The cyclists flocked to the race not only for its importance, confirmed over the course of sixteen editions, but also for the qualifying points for the **HERO UCI Marathon World Cup's** overall ranking.

The most stunning and toughest – for its distance-hm ratio – mountain bike marathon in the world also doubled as the UCI World Cup's fourth round, welcoming **180** Elite and Master cyclists.

AN ITALIAN HEROINE

Selva Val Gardena was the starting point, finish line, and the stage of the HERO Bike Festival. The town's main square saw the Elite Women cross the finish line first, after racing across 60 km and 3,200 hm. But only one of them could win, and that one person was **Claudia Peretti**, from Italy, who crushed any hopes of victory for her rivals on the first climb toward Passo Gardena, and never relinquished her lead. The Italian Marathon Champion finished the race in 3:53:48.

What are the thoughts of 28-year-old Claudia Peretti? *"My legs seemed to have a life of their own this morning – I listened to them and tried to set a pace which reflected that. I did well. Yes, granted, going at full throttle can be risky, but when you feel in the zone, giving it a shot is worth it. Today was my day and nothing could stop me."* A victory accompanied by an emotional embrace between the winner and Marzio Deho, her team manager and trainer. This victory confirms a good season for the cyclist from Omegna, in Piedmont, which also saw her win the Italian Marathon race last May.

Rosa van Doorn, from The Netherlands, crossed the finish line 2:32 behind Peretti – the race's second part saw her make an amazing recovery, rising from the eighth position after 30 km to the second place. The HERO was important for the 2025 World Cup champion to get back on her saddle for the season, after having been forced to recover due to a knee injury at the start of the racing season. **Paula Gorycka Kurmann** from Poland finished in 3:57:41, finishing third and beating the 4th-spot curse which had been plaguing her during this 2026 World Cup. *"I knew Anna Weinbeer was gaining on me, but I was too determined – I simply couldn't stomach another consolation medal."* The fourth spot during this round went to the current overall ranking leader who has been crushing this season so far – Anna Weinbeer, from Switzerland and representing KTM Spada Brenta Brakes, missed out on the third spot by only three seconds. She congratulated her rivals acknowledging their strength in today's race, but we know she still has a shot at the HERO Dolomites podium in the future.

A CLASH OF TITANS

All bets were off in the Men's category, as the head of the race was constantly changing – until **David Valero Serrano**, from Spain and representing **Klimatiza Orbea Team**, prevailed and won the HERO's 86 km and 4,500 hm trail in 4:30:11. The race's second half was decisive, as Tim Smeenge, from The Netherlands and Dutch Marathon Champion, finished the Dantercepies climb 18 seconds ahead of former road cycling star Diego Rosa, who returned to his first love – mountain biking –, and the other podium hopefuls. Among them Leo Paez, a HERO veteran with his eight wins, David Valero Serrano from Spain who was wearing the 2026 HERO UCI Marathon World Cup leader jersey, Wout Alleman from Belgium in tiptop shape, and a young Dario Cherchi who transitioned from the U23 category and is showing his mettle in the Marathon Elite category. After Arabba, even other hopefuls such as Andreas Seewald, Lorenzo Samparisi, and even Alleman himself couldn't keep up with the breakaway. At the Pordoi, it all came down to five cyclists: the Klimatiza Orbea captain went all in, followed by Paez and Cherchi, both representing Leecougan Basso Factory Team (a show of team spirit, maybe?). Rosa and Smeenge were right behind them, catching their breath after a start at full speed. At the Lupo Bianco, Cherchi, from Liguria, had to slow down, while Leo Paez, just ahead of him, had to deal with a handlebar malfunction – and Rosa didn't miss his chance to race past him. That's when Smeenge

came back to life, and joined the head of the race trio – however, Valero Serrano – who won a Tokyo 2020 bronze – is known for increasing the pace right at the very end of a race, and left his rivals behind, crossing the finish line with nobody else in sight in Selva di Val Gardena.

The Spaniard won the 2026 HERO, and enthusiastically told us: *“This was my first HERO. I knew I had to play it safely. I followed the pace of the group. I had to take my chance in one of the climbs – after the Duron, the Zallinger climb allowed me to push and keep the lead until the finish line. What can I say? I'd been toying with the idea of the HERO for years, and winning it on my first attempt? That's incredible.”* What's even more impressive is Cherchi and Paez were racing with a 32T and 34T chainring, while Valero raced with a 36T chainring – proving he can really rev the engine when needed.

A victory which is all the more sweeter considering who the runner-ups were: top-notch, fierce rivals the likes of **Diego Rosa**, who finished 41.4 behind the winner, and **Tim Smeenge** from The Netherlands, who finished the HERO in 4:31:00. Both cyclists set a back-breaking pace right from the very first kilometres.

Uwe Hochwarter from Austria, and **Sophie Johnson** from Team GB, won the Master category.

Today's victory sees David Valero, Klimatiza Orbea Team, and Anna Weinbeer, KTM Spada Brenta Brakes, wearing the overall ranking's red leader jersey. They'll wear it on the circuit's fifth round in Kirchzarten, in Germany, at the **Black Forest ULTRA Bike Marathon** on 26 July 2026.

AN INTERNATIONAL RACE

The HERO Südtirol Dolomites is international in nature: the start list comprised cyclists from 54 countries and five continents, a diversity reflected in the rankings' top positions. In the Women's category, a **good eight different countries were among the top 10**, whereas for the Men's category **seven countries were proudly represented**. It goes without saying that even the race's visibility was truly global, as the HERO Südtirol Dolomites' TV broadcast was seen in five continents.

The complete rankings can be seen on www.datasport.com and <https://www.heroucimathonworldcup.com/>

The 2026 HERO Südtirol Dolomites – The 2026 HERO UCI Marathon World Cup

MEN'S RANKING

1.	VALERO SERRANO DAVID	SPA	KLIMATIZA ORBEA	4:30:11	
2.	ROSA DIEGO	ITA		4:30:52	+41,4
3.	SMEENGE TIM	NED		4:31:00	+49,0
4.	PAEZ LEON HECTOR LEONARDO	COL	LEECOUGAN BASSO	4:31:19	+1:08,2
5.	CHERCHI DARIO	ITA	LEECOUGAN BASSO	4:33:40	+3:29,8
6.	ALLEMAN WOUT	BEL		4:34:53	+4:42,4
7.	SEEWALD ANDREAS	GER	SINGER KTM RACING	4:36:09	+5:58,4
8.	PORRO SAMUELE	ITA	KLIMATIZA ORBEA	4:37:17	+7:05,9
9.	SAMPARISI LORENZO	ITA	KTM SPADA	4:37:48	+7:37,0
10.	GESCHE ANTONA SEBASTIAN ANDRES	CHI	KLIMATIZA ORBEA	4:38:19	+8:08,8

WOMEN'S RANKING

1.	PERETTI CLAUDIA	ITA		3:53:48	
2.	VAN DOORN ROSA	NED		3:56:21	+2:32

3.	GORYCKA - KURMANN PAULA	POL		3:57:41	+3:52
4.	WEINBEER ANNA	SUI	KTM SPADA	3:57:44	+3:55
5.	PIANA DEBORA	ITA		4:00:41	+6:52
6.	FUMAGALLI MARA	ITA	KTM SPADA	4:02:01	+8:12
7.	BOHLIN AMANDA	SWE		4:03:04	+9:15
8.	NJEMCEVIC LEJLA	BIH		4:03:18	+9:29
9.	BOLTON CHELSEA	USA		4:05:15	+11:26
10.	FISCHER EGUSQUIZA NATALIA	SPA	EXTREMADURA ECOPILAS	4:06:07	+12:18

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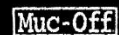
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