



THE 2026 HERO UCI CROSS-COUNTRY MARATHON WORLD CUP: MORE INTERNATIONAL, SHOWCASING MTB MARATHONS

The 2026 HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup closes the season with over 7,000 cyclists from 54 countries, which include 879 Elite registrations, and a growing media presence. A season which cements its profile on the international mountain bike marathon scene. The numbers speak for themselves.

The 2026 edition of the **HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup** finished a few days ago. This was the second edition of the international mountain bike marathon circuit managed by the HERO. However, the end of the season delivers much more than just a final, overall ranking.

The 2026 calendar visited **Spain's Costa Blanca, Elba Island in Italy, the Pyrenees in Andorra** and the **Dolomites in Italy, the Black Forest in Germany**, and closed the circuit once again in **Spain, on the Costa Brava**. These are some of mountain bike marathons' most iconic locations, with the circuit spanned four countries and encompassed six races.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE SPORT

The numbers are crystal-clear: the circuit is growing. In 2026, the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup welcomed **879 Elite athletes from 28 countries**, representing a **5% increase in Elite participation** and a **17% increase in countries represented** compared to 2025. A figure which confirms the growing allure of the series across the globe, and its gradual consolidation among the go-to events in mountain bike marathons.

The circuit's six rounds also welcomed over **7,000 cyclists split among Elite, Master, and amateurs from 54 countries**, representing a **12% growth of overall participants, and a 51% increase of Master cyclists** compared to the previous season. This proves the event can

attract the best professional athletes and the amateur mountain biking community all with one identity.

BEYOND THE RACE TRACK

Further confirmation can be found in the sharp rise of the circuit's international media visibility. During 2026, the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup featured in around **1,000 newspaper articles**, a **26% increase compared to 2025**, with a total reach, i.e. the total number of readers split between paper and digital papers, TV, and radio, of over **300 million**. The overall reach jumped to over **200%**, a sign of the growing international significance of the circuit and its capacity to reach evermore wider audiences.

At the same time, TV coverage reached **24 countries**, a **26% hike compared to the 19 reached in 2025**. This contributed to spreading the tales of the season well beyond the host countries' borders, showcasing the circuit's locations across the globe. Even the TV audience grew significantly, by **188% YOY**.

The same trend can be seen across the digital platforms: the 2026 content generated **over 25 million views and impressions**, around **340%** more compared to 2025. Engagement on the circuit's official social media channels increased by **350%**, and publications increased by **77%**, confirming the interest and passion fans and followers have for the mountain bike marathon circuit and its stars.

The live broadcast and commentary on the UCI's official YouTube channel, together with shares on their social media channels, contributed significantly to these results. It allowed the circuit to reach its target audience and people who are passionate about cycling.

While the numbers are important, what truly makes a difference is the overall trend which emerges: a sport which continues growing its audience and a circuit which, in the course of two seasons, has carved out its own space, one which is becoming more international every time.

Gerhard Vanzi, coordinator of the HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup, says: *"The HERO UCI Cross-country Marathon World Cup's second season has confirmed the project's worth and how marathons can grow on an international stage which is increasingly competitive. The results are encouraging: we'll continue cycling down this path, together with the UCI, the Organising Committees, and partners to further develop the sport and enhance all its identities and participants – from top-notch professional athletes to amateurs."*

WHAT LIES AHEAD

A message which is bolstered by the renewal of the agreement between the **Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)** and the **HERO** as circuit coordinator **until 2030**. This guarantees the project's continuity as well as providing the circuit with a steward until one of the most important events in the sport of the next decade.

2030 will mark an important year as the **HERO Südtirol Dolomites** – one of the circuit's rounds and, indeed, the inspiration behind it – will host the **UCI Marathon World Championships**. This achievement represents a new opportunity to grow for the entire movement.

While the 2026 edition has finished, work is well underway in view of the next season. With the number of participants growing, an ever more consolidated international profile, and the involvement of some of the sport's most prestigious events, the HERO UCI Cross-country

Marathon World Cup is soaring into the future, relying on strong foundations and an ever more global profile for mountain bike marathons.

Organising Committee

HERO UCI MARATHON WORLD CUP

I-39048 Selva Val Gardena (BZ)

www.heroucimarathonworldcup.com – info@heroucimarathonworldcup.com

Press Office LDL COMeta / Martina MERISI

Tel. +39 375 775 0030

www.ldlcometa.it - press@heroucimarathonworldcup.com

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