



HERO DUBAI: A ONE-TAKE WONDER! A DEBUT CEMENTING THE MOUNTAIN BIKE'S INTERNATIONAL PROFILE

The first feedback for the HERO Dubai's first edition is trickling in. The event represented the start of the HERO World Series, an international mountain bike circuit, which will continue in June on the Dolomites with the HERO Südtirol Dolomites and finish in October in Thailand with the HERO Thai. More than 400 participants representing 53 countries sprinted across the start line in the UAE: proof of how sport builds bridges and is as international as it gets.

Hashtag: #HEROWorldSeries #HERODubai #HERODolomites #HEROThai #XDubai

Where do ideas come from? Hard to say. From dreams, events, brainstorming or, for the undeniable romantics out there, after looking at a child's drawing. Believe it or not, that is how the **HERO Dubai** project came to be: looking at a haphazard line traced by a girl in the sand of Dubai's desert – Dubai, an international hub connecting Europe to Asia and America.

The HERO Dubai is the first lap of the new HERO World Series international circuit. The event was born following the success of the now iconic HERO Südtirol Dolomites, the toughest mountain bike marathon in the world. The first race was held on Friday, 7 February and was **organised with XDubai**, a sport marketing company promoting sport in the UAE region, and the operational support of the **Dubai Sports Council**. February is a sport-packed month for Dubai: indeed, it will host a good 70 sport events! Triathlon, road bicycle racing, tennis, and, of course, mountain bike too.



Javad Khoramifar, General Manager of XDubai, said: 'At XDubai, we are always looking for high standard format sportive events to bring to the UAE and we had been working for two years to make the HERO happen here in Hatta, Dubai. The aim of organising this race was to build an event that will grow year on year until we reach a format and scale similar to the main stage race in the Dolomites, Italy.

Thanks to our partner Meraas and Hatta Municipality, the first edition of the HERO Dubai was a great success. With more than 400 local and international bikers, we were able to organise a tough, safe and fun race. Preparations are already under way for the Hero Dubai 2021 edition, which will also coincide with the Expo 2020 Dubai: we aim to organise and gather the biggest MTB community event in the Middle East.'

An international event



Dubai is a strategically placed hub, considering how the HERO Dubai saw the participation of **over 400 participants hailing from 53 different countries**. The podium was similarly diverse, with athletes from six different countries taking a medal home: Colombia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Iran, Lithuania, and Slovenia. The winners, Leonardo Paez, current titleholder of the UCI Mountain Bike Marathon World Champion, and Blaza Pintaric from Slovenia, garnered attention right from the

get-go, striking gold in a competition that from its infancy brimmed with potential.

The Middle East region hosted a mountain bike event featured in the international calendar of the UCI, the International Cycling Union, for the first time in its history. The HERO Dubai is proud to have been that event.

'HERO Dubai has made a huge splash on its debut here and this is another confirmation of Dubai's reputation as a top-class host of diverse international sports events,' said **Khalid Al Awar, Director of Sports Events Department of Dubai Sports Council**. 'We are proud of this achievement and we – the Dubai Sports Council and the Organising Team – always endeavour to deliver events that not only meet the expectations of participants and fans, but regularly exceed them.

We host and co-host five official Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) events in Dubai, including the HERO Dubai and the magnificent UAE Tour, and this is proof of this sport's growing popularity in Dubai and the UAE. We also host a number of other international, regional and domestic cycling competitions, and we have dedicated cycling tracks across the city.

The media and many of our fans say Dubai is one of the top cycling destinations in the world: we are looking forward to building on that reputation, and delivering an even bigger and better HERO Dubai when the HERO World Series visits us next year.'

An exclusive location



services such as a professionally staffed bicycle hire outlet.

Hatta, or the **Hatta Wadi Hub** to be precise, was the stage for the first edition of the HERO Dubai. The Hub is a structure for outdoor sport activities, set in Dubai's stunning National Park. The site was chosen by Meraas, a Dubai-based holding company whose aim is to improve the Emirate's urban landscape with people-centred solutions. The Hatta Wadi Hub focuses on mountain bikes by offering not only an expansive trail network on which to explore Dubai's desert but also numerous

Rashid Al Sharif, Chief Operating Officer, Meraas, said: *'It is a great pleasure to be able to showcase the adventurous spirit of Hatta to the mountain biking world. The high-octane energy that the HERO World Series brings to Hatta is an exciting prospect for everyone who knows the spectacular setting that the National Park offers to outdoor enthusiasts of all ages and interests.*

Hosting the world's best mountain bikers and launching the inaugural Dubai HERO shows how the UAE is pushing its ambition to foster a sporty, active population in line with the nation's Vision 2021. Its aim is to support a cohesive, healthy society brought together by an array of sports.'

Global visibility



The first edition of the HERO Dubai will go down in history for the runaway success in terms of number of participants in the Middle East as well as for its international media coverage. **The race was covered by the main international news outlets, reaching a total of 94 million viewers across Europe, Asia and America.**

The race was broadcast on Dubai Sports, the first sport channel in Dubai, and on BeinSports across the entire MENA region, the Pacific region as well as Europe, the

United States, and Mexico.

The main cycling and mountain bike websites streamed the HERO Dubai race for one hour. When it came to the social media channels of both the event and its partners, the race recorded numerous views – and the same can be said about the social media of associations and communities which participated in the HERO Dubai 2020.

*"The HERO World Series circuit was created to deliver and awaken the unique emotions felt while riding a mountain bike against the backdrop of stunning natural landscapes," says **Gerhard Vanzi, the man behind the HERO.** 'We are incredibly proud to have delivered the spirit and allure of an event born on the Dolomites to Dubai's desert. We thank the organisations which have supported us on this journey, and we look forward to the next two events.'*

The Dubai race was a runaway success, and next up is the second race of the **HERO World Series 2020** circuit. The second stage returns to where it all began: in Italy. On **20 June 2020** the eleventh edition of the **HERO Südtirol Dolomites** will take place on the

Dolomites. The circuit will finish with the **HERO Thai** in Thailand on **10 October 2020**. To date, a good 33 people have signed up for all three races.

For further information visit www.herodubai.com and www.heroworldseries.com

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