



HERO DUBAI: LEONARDO PAEZ AND BLAZA PINTARIC WIN THE FIRST EDITION

Leonardo Paez and Blaza Pintaric strike gold during the first edition of the HERO Dubai, having won the inaugural edition of the HERO World Series 2020 circuit. A success on all fronts, including registrations: over 400 bikers flocked to the starting line, representing 50 countries at the first international mountain bike race organised in the UAE featured in the UCI calendar.

After HERO Dubai's curtain call, we are preparing the scene for the Dolomites, host of the eleventh HERO Südtirol Dolomites edition on 20 June 2020.

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

Dubai (UAE) 7 February 2020 – More than four hundred athletes flocked to the starting line today for the debut of the HERO Dubai, the first race of the international HERO World Series circuit. The event took place at the Hatta Wadi Hub, set in Dubai's breathtaking National Park. A clear sky was the background for the 50 fluttering flags, setting the scene for a constant crescendo of emotions, made even more alluring due to the natural backdrop of the event.



There are two routes to choose from: the first is a 'long', marathon one boasting 60 km and featuring 1,600 m elevation gain, featured in the UCI international calendar. This route was chosen by some of the most important Elite male and female athletes on the international scene, competing to become the first Dubai HEROes. The second route is a 'short' one with 30 km and 800 m elevation gain.

THE MEN'S PODIUM



HERO Dubai 2020 – from left, Peeter Pruus, Leonardo Paez and Kristian Hynek.

The Elite men's category saw **Leonardo Paez** from Team Giant Polimedical take centre stage with a time of 2:07.29,6. Next up was **Pruus Peeter** (EST) from Team Torpado-Südtirol MTB Pro Team with a 4,28-minute gap. The third on the podium was **Hynek Kristian** (CZE) from Team Future Cycling Nothwave coming in at 2:11.58,1.

'I know the route well,' said Leonardo Paez, 'so after the first bike park stretch, I went full steam ahead. The initial part is fairly technical as it is, and then I tackled the midway climb on my own. I had to get off and push the bike: sitting on the

saddle is not an option on this terrain. I gave it my all as I did not know how much of an advantage I had over the other rivals.'

Together with the race's analysis, Paez also gave his overall impression of the event: *'Based on my experience, I would give this route a '5' on a scale of 1 to 10, which is not a bad challenge for the start of the season. I believe true fans will appreciate the event's backdrop, and I recommend it to everyone: it is simply unique.'*

Finally, some technical tips from the Columbian athlete: *'Amateurs should opt for a full suspension, although a front suspension could be useful for the climb. Drinking, however, is essential: I drank four flasks today!'*

THE WOMEN'S PODIUM

The Elite women also pulled out all the stops: just like their counterparts, they showed what stuff they are made of on the 60 km route. A blazing, golden star shot onto the podium of the HERO Dubai in the guise of **Blaza Pintaric**, representing Team Pintatim, coming in at 2:35.00,6. Following in her wake, **Sosna Katazina** (LIT) from Team Torpado-Südtirol MTB Pro Team registered a time of 2:39.54,6, preceding **Partoazar Faranak** (IRN) in third place from National Team, closing the event at 2:55.15,2.



HERO Dubai 2020 – from left, Katazina Sosna, Blaza Pintaric and Faranak Partoazar.

'A really nice race,' says Blaza Pintaric, Slovenia, after cutting the finishing line. 'I really had fun in this unique, amazing landscape. I pedalled beside Katazina for the first kilometres until the refreshment station. Then I pushed myself harder and faced the climb on my own. It was extremely difficult to pedal and keep on the saddle, so I had to get off the bike in some parts and push it. There was nobody else with me during the last kilometres, and I fully enjoyed the landscape on which I pedalled.'

During the Award Ceremony, the two winners, **Leonardo Paez** and **Blaza Pintaric**, will be awarded the Leader Medal of the HERO World Series 2020 circuit. They will wear the medal during the second event at the HERO Südtirol Dolomites on 20 June 2020.

THE HERO WORLD SERIES 2020

This was a momentous occasion for Dubai: 2020 will go down in history as the year in which the Middle East Region hosted a mountain bike event featured in the international calendar of the UCI, the International Cycling Federation. A runaway success both in terms of participants and international media coverage. The Dubai event has been a success, and the gears are in motion for the second event of the HERO World Series 2020 circuit. Time to head back to where it all started: in Italy with the HERO Südtirol Dolomites. The circuit will close with the HERO Thai in Thailand on 10 October 2020. To this day, 31 bikers, including 4 women, have signed up to all three events.

HERO DUBAI, MEN'S RANKING (60 KM)

1. PAEZ LEON HECTOR LEONARDO (COL) - Team Giant Polimedical - 2:07.29,6
2. PRUUS PEETER (EST) - Torpado-Südtirol MTB Pro Team - 2:11.57,8
3. HYNEK KRISTIAN (CZE) - Future Cycling Nothwave - 2:11.58,1
4. CHIARINI RICCARDO (ITA) - Torpado-Südtirol MTB Pro Team - 2:16.25,6
5. ZANASCA LUCA (ITA) - Team COMOBIKE - 2:16.29,3

HERO DUBAI, WOMEN'S RANKING (60 KM)

1. PINTARIC BLAZA (SLO) - Team Pintatim - 2:35.00,6
2. SOSNA KATAZINA (LIT) - Torpado-Südtirol MTB Pro Team - 2:39.54,6
3. PARTOAZAR FARANAK (IRN) - National Team - 2:55.15,2
4. ZIOLKOWSKA MICHALINA (POL) CST 7R MTB Team - 2:57.50,9
5. DORMITORIO ARIANA (PHI) - Team Ariana - 2:59.00,9

For complete ranking and intermediate times, visit:

<https://www.datasport.com/live/ranking/?racenr=221034>

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