



## A “SHARK” IN THE DOLOMITES

*From professional road cyclist to mountain biker for fun: Vincenzo Nibali has chosen to take part in the HERO Südtirol Dolomites, on 17 June.*

**Hashtag: #heroseries, #herodolomites, #südtirol #dolomites**

You need mountains of talent to win a stage race – but being one of the few professional road cyclists who won all three of the major circuits? That means being an absolute legend. That's exactly who Vincenzo Nibali is, and let's not forget his success at the Il Lombardia and Sanremo races. The Shark of Messina retired last year from professional racing after 18 years on the roads, which left many wondering what he'd do. His close friends knew he'd not give up cycling.

*“Cycling, to me, is life: I still enjoy it even though it's not my job any longer. And I like mountain biking. I've always used it as a way to low key train, even during winter.”* He got plenty of hours in during the lockdowns in Switzerland, where he currently lives, and then continued doing so a couple of times a month after the lockdowns were lifted.

He may say he's given up professional cycling, but we've found online pictures of



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him competing in mountain bike races. *"Busted. I competed at a race on Elba Island, and this year I took part in the South Africa Cape Epic. I decided to continue mountain biking because it's fun: it always requires utmost attention, outstanding technique, and a tank full of energy."* The Shark masterfully summed up the quintessence of mountain biking. And now he's about to raise the bar by taking on the HERO.



Vincenzo Nibali

*"I've always heard of it, and I know that besides the stunning views it offers, it's extremely demanding,"* and he hit the nail on the head there. When we casually mention that it's the toughest mountain bike marathon in the world based on the km/hm ratio, we're met by silence stunned silence on the other end. *"... yes, Aru mentioned it was a tough race."* Fabio Aru took part in last year's edition. The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the HERO Südtirol Dolomites will take place on Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> June, featuring the two classic routes boasting 86 km and 4,500 hm

and 60 km and 3,200 hm. Vincenzo will be competing in the longest and most demanding of the two.

With such a demanding event, the next topic we talked about was training: *"Well, I like to play it by ear,"* which for someone like him doesn't mean giving up training entirely, far from it. *"And I know the climbs and descents of the Dolomites well. That being said, doing them on asphalt isn't the same as on mountain trails."*

He'll have to find time to train now that he's the new ambassador and consultant of the Q36.5 team. *"Now that's certainly something new. I'll have to train there, for sure."* He jests, but you can see he takes it seriously. *"I like working with the team and being close to them. The same goes for the companies and when it comes to developing the equipment."* Not a word of a lie there, as confirmed by his former technicians: he's meticulous to a fault when it comes to preparing a bike. *"I've got some Scott's Spark in my garage, but I doubt I'll compete in the HERO with a front..."*

Nibali highlights the importance of being a multidisciplinary person, and the key message here is you've got to give it your all both on and off a bike. We're sure the Shark of Messina will give us something to talk about when we see him next in the Dolomites.

For further information visit [www.herodolomites.com](http://www.herodolomites.com)

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