



LEONARDO PAEZ E SALLY BIGHAM TRIUMPH AT THE HERO 2016

On a memorable sporting day, full of bravery and fatigue, Leonardo Paez triumphs in the seventh HERO Südtirol Dolomites: the biker from team Olympia Polimedical won in the 86 kilometre race (making it the fourth time he has won the race), leaving behind in second place the German biker Markus Kaufmann from team RJC Ravensburg and third home was Daniele Mensi from Top Race Team ASD.

In the women's race victory went to Sally Bigham from team Topeak Ergon Racing and the podium was completed by Michalina Ziolkowska representing Volkswagen Samochody Uzytkowe and Maria Cristina Nisi from Veneto in Italy, cycling for Bike Garage Revolution. In the shorter 60 kilometre race first home was Jhonny Cattaneo followed by Johann Pallhuber.

Gerhard Vanzi commented: "The HERO is ever more the race which bikers need to add to their cv, and it of course represents a great boost for tourism here in our mountains."

Selva di Val Gardena (BZ) 18.06.2016 – In the end it was **Leonardo Paez**, the biker from team who led the others home over the 86 kilometre route of the HERO Südtirol Dolomites (it having an altitude difference of 4,600 metres) in a time of 4:34.51. This was certainly a fine performance by the Colombian rider who is often based here in Italy and it is the fourth

time that his name now appears at the top of the HERO winners board. The concerns about his form prior to the race proved unfounded and the team can breathe a sigh of relief. In this season Paez had competed in cross-country events in an attempt to be selected for Rio, but unfortunately he was not picked. This disappointment behind him Paez has shown that he was able to concentrate on this race come out top again, this after his victories here in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Today he left behind two feared rivals, **Markus Kaufmann** from team RJC Ravensburg and **Daniele Mensi** from the **Daniele Mensi team**, these two riders arriving more or less together but 5 minutes nearly behind the winner.

«I am very happy about this fourth victory. All thanks to my team for having supported me throughout the race. On the first ascent I kept a regular pace and the Germans *Kauffman and Käß* were ahead of me. I did not panic for I know how long the race is and I caught up with them on the descent to Corvara and then stayed ahead until the end.» This is the explanation of **Paez** on how the race went.

The women's race too was a hard technical and physical test and the winner was **Sally Bigham** from team Topeak Ergon Racing, relegating to second place the Polish rider **Michalina Ziolkowska**, racing for the *Volkswagen Samochody Uzytkowe Team*, and in third position was **Maria Cristina Nisi**, she pedalling hard for team Bike Garage Revolution.

In the after-race interview **Sally Bigham** said «*It was a hard race with long uphill and downhill, and very steep they are too. The route was difficult and technically demanding, especially because of the weather conditions. The HERO is a special race and enjoys a great and particular atmosphere. Notwithstanding my two falls coming down from Passo Pordoi I made it and did not hurt me – this too important for next week are the World Championships*».

In the 60 kilometre race, it too a tough test with its 3,300 metres of altitude difference, the biker first back **Jhonny Cattaneo** from team Wilier Force Squadra Corse

The wonder of the Dolomites

4,016 athletes this morning competed in a race which has no rival anywhere in the world, and it set in the UNESCO World Heritage of the Dolomites, a beautiful location that in itself is worth the race registration. Again this year the two routes designed around the Sella Group have proved to be both of unrivalled beauty and of incomparable toughness in biking terms - a 'must do' race on the international circuit. This prestige was confirmed in 2015 when the UCI World marathon Championships were held here. The story goes on and this year there were 4,016 competitors from 50 countries, and among the Italians there were 103 provinces represented.

"These numbers confirm the success of our event. The effort needed and the organisation required are considerable and we are careful to keep an eye on the development of the race in terms of sustainability and in a way to best protect and value our mountain territory, our Dolomites." These are the words of Genni Tschurtschenthaler, General Manager of the organising committee.



HERO Südtirol Dolomites 2016 the winner Leonardo Paez
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The tourism benefit

The beauty of the mountains was seen on Eurosport, it broadcasting the race to 67 countries in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. The four valleys of the Dolomites are a great attraction for mountain bikers and it is no coincidence that from this summer the project "HERO Trails" starts. It is a collaboration involving expert Mountain Bike Guides who live across the four valleys, and itineraries have been established representing different grades of difficulty and of technical nature (single trail, pleasure trail, e-bike trail). It will have a significant economic return.: «In the weekend of the HERO there are about 8,000 arrivals and 20,000-23,000 hotel nights booked which can be compared to 3 million Euro of added values – informs Gerhard Vanzi, he the inventor of the HERO - The broadcasting of the event can be equated to a value of 2 million Euro, and the likelihood of bringing biking tourists to Alto Adige is great».

The organisation of all requires the help of 600 volunteers who diligently prepare and support throughout – a silent and fundamental presence – explains Peter Runggaldier, race technical director—to assure the safe and successful completion of the event.».

Classification:

<https://services.datasport.com/2016/mtb/sellaronda/>

Partial results

HERO Südtirol Dolomites 2016

Man – 86 km

1. Paez Leon Hector Leonardo	COL	4:34.51,8
2. Kaufmann Markus	DE	4:40.11,0
3. Mensi Daniele	ITA	4:40.13,5

4. Geismayr Daniel	AUT	4:41.53,2
5. Ragnoli Juri	ITA	4:44.45,5

Woman – 60 km

1. Bigham Sally	GB	4:02.50,4
2. ZiolkowskaMichalina	PL	4:06.37,6
3. Nisi Maria Cristina	ITA	4:25.55,8
4. Sadlecka Magdalena	PL	4:28.04,8
5. Sommer Sabine	AUT	4:31.03,1

Man - 60 km

1. Cattaneo Johnny	ITA	3:30.35,2
2. Pallhuber Johann	ITA	3:30.35,8
3.Rauchfuss Marek	CZ	3:38.41,0
4. Timberi Andrea	ITA	3:39.04,4
5. Pliem Manuel	AUT	3:40.07,7



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