



THE 2024 HERO ABU DHABI HUDAYRIYAT ISLAND: PETER SAGAN AND OTHER CHAMPIONS

The air is buzzing with excitement at the prospect of the first edition of the HERO Abu Dhabi Hudayriyat Island – even more so after receiving confirmation of the starting list. The event will take place on 11 February 2024 and has attracted a well-known crowd from the international XCO landscape. They will all compete on the circuit of the island's facility with a view of qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Hashtag: #heroabudhabihudayriyatiland #abudhabi #hudayriyatiland #hero #heroseries

The first edition of the **HERO Abu Dhabi Hudayriyat Island** sponsored by **Modon** will take place between 9 and 11 February 2024. This weekend will be a celebration of everything mountain bike, a tempting call for many renowned elite athletes. Their goal? The XCO Class 1 race, which will net them many important points to qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.

The only UCI mountain bike in the Middle East will see a good **21 countries** kick off from the starting line, representing the best of the best in the world of XCO. All cyclists will be competing against one another on **Sunday, 11 February**, on the Trail X track on Hudayriyat Island in Abu Dhabi.

Among all of the confirmed participants, one name stands out: three-time Road Cycling Champion **Peter Sagan**, who was never shy about his Olympic podium ambitions in the discipline which, after having stepped down from road cycling, will see his debut in the elite category.

THE HEROES

The Men's starting list of Cross-country Olympic boasts a good 14 national champions and three continental champions: **David Campos** for Europe, **Ben Oliver** for Australia, and **Philip Buys** for Africa.



Philip Buys

Buy's says: "I look forward to taking part in the inaugural Hero Abu Dhabi XCO race. It will also be my first visit to Abu Dhabi and I am excited for the experience to race in this area. I think the event will be unique and something different from other XCO races, so I am glad to be one of the first riders to be part of this exciting event. Staying more or less in the same time zone with traveling to Abu Dhabi for me from South Africa is not too much strain and made the decision to take part an easier one. The organisation team seems to be of top standard and the date fits in nicely with my prep for the rest of the season."

Even **Luca Braidot**, the current Italian champion and winner of last year's World bronze, will take part. "I'll compete in the Abu Dhabi race after a month of preparation in Liguria with the Italian team and with my own team. I still won't be at 100% output, but I want to perform well. I already had the chance to see the track in November – and what a unique one it is – and I liked it a lot, especially its location. A swift and spectacular race awaits, with many cyclists racing for victory. I cannot wait until 11 February to start the season and show people what I've got."



Luca Braidot_Photocredit © Alessio Pederiva - SCRS

Gustav Pedersen, Danish XCO champion, will also fight for a spot on the podium, and even **Diego Alfonso Arias Cuervo**, Colombian XCO champion, will not give up so easily.

OUR HEROES IN THE WOMEN'S CATEGORY



Ingrid Jacobsen_Photocredit © Keno Derleyn

The Women's starting line is just as impressive, with Italy's reigning XCO champion **Martina Berta** joining the starting tanks, already boasting a World XCO title for 2023. Joining her is **Sofie Pedersen** from Sweden, current European Under23 XCO champion, and **Ingrid Jacobsen**, seven-time Norwegian XCO champion and ready for her season debut. She says: "I am really looking forward to be visiting and racing in Abu Dhabi. It will be my first race of the season, and I think it is going to be a lot of fun!"

Giving them a good run for their money will be UCI World Series Champion **Lejla Njemčević**, ready for her second HERO adventure, and **Rebecca Henderson** from Australia.

Henderson states: "The opportunity to come to race in Abu Dhabi is really exciting for me. My initial plan was to stay in Australia for the entire summer however this opportunity came up and I couldn't refuse. It will be my first race of 2024 so I go there without expectations and only opportunities. I'm excited to visit UAE for the first time after flying through so many times and to get the 2024 season started!"



Rebecca Henderson_Photocredit ©
David Slmo

AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT

The HERO Abu Dhabi Hudayriyat Island' XCO Cross-country Olympic races on 11 February will be broadcast around the world, across a good **46 countries and 4 continents**. The XCO races will also be streamed online on **Red Bull TV**.

Organising Committee

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