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Superbike for tough bikers

We could not imagine the mountain biking scene today without this internationally renowned mountain bike marathon in the Dolomites. The Südtirol Dolomiti Superbike beckons again with a new and extremely tough course.

“To celebrate this year’s 15th anniversary, we’ve included a new stretch which leads straight up the Helm,” explains Kurt Ploner, president of the organising team. “In other words, competitors doing the long-distance course will have an additional elevation gain of 400 m on about 2 km of the course, while enjoying the Sexten Dolomites and a beautiful view of Hochpustertal,” chuckles Ploner.

Insiders know very well what that means. From the turn-off to Waldruhe (Sexten), bikers head towards Helm on the firm gravel track up to Jägerhütte. The competitors have to negotiate three extremely demanding ramps on the way. The fastest to ascend will be presented with a prize by Helm cableways.

Bike pros recently tested how tough the new stretch is. Thomas Dietsch and Karl Platt from the Bulls, last year’s world champion Roel Paulissen and three pros from South Tyrol, Mike Felderer, Hannes Pallhuber and Roland Stauder tried out the course on behalf of this year’s competitors. According to Mike Felderer, reigning Italian mountain bike marathon champion since September 2008, “The track up to Helm and the route on to Sexten make it longer and add an elevation gain of about 400 m. That’s going to make a big difference to the course of the race. In the past, the ascent to Rotwand was shorter so the field wasn’t spread out so much. Now the ascent from Innichen is much longer. That’ll separate the wheat from the chaff.”

“There are three extremely steep stretches. We biked last week the entire course again with Roel Paulissen from Belgium (last year’s MTB marathon world champion). According to my reckoning, we’ve got inclines of up to 30% parts of the way, which is a great challenge for mountain bikers. It took us about five hours to do elevation gains of 3,658 m on 115.5 km of the course,” reports Hannes Pallhuber who won seven races and the overall ranking of the marathon tour in 2008.