

Cheile Gradistei – September 25, 2017

Champions of CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC 2017: Slovak riders Tomas and Janka!

During the 3 Stages in the very heart of the Carpathians, the cyclists offered an amazing show and an admirable demonstration of force

Three days of spectacular competition at CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC 2017! Champions from 10 countries fought with nature on the tracks of Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains, and managed to conquer the peaks after 157 km of riding and 5,750 meters of climbing. The CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC competition, newly enrolled in the UCI 2018 calendar, was considered by professional cyclists as one of the toughest, if not the most challenging of the ones they participated so far. The winners were the athletes from Slovakia and Ukraine.

"Hard, beautiful, cold, rocky, very technical, excellent, challenging ... I like it" - this is the very short summary of the first edition of **CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC**, a mountain bike competition organized by [MPG](#) Romania, which offered to almost 100 riders, dozens of supporters and thousands of fans an amazing cycling show during September 21-24. The event, supported by Banca Transilvania and Gatorade, included a prologue and 3 stages in the Southern Carpathians, with the Start / Finish and Race Village area organized at the Cheile Gradistei - Fundata Resort.

If on the first day of the competition the capricious weather and the altitude have put their resistance to the test, in the next two days the cyclists have been facing heavy climbs and steep descent that have fully strained their abilities and techniques. The most resilient but also fastest athletes were from Slovakia and Ukraine. They managed to detach themselves from the rest of the participants during the three days of CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC 2017, and the alliance they made helped and brought them victory.

Slovak Tomas Visnovský, the winner of all 3 stages of this competition, arrived yesterday at the Start line in 2 hours and 47 minutes, after finishing the last race, the shortest – only 45 km – but with many difficult parts. *"Today was very tough and I am very tired. The legs did not move too well. The climbs were extremely steep. The weather was very good but the route was again very tough! I feel perfect now that I won this contest and that I am a champion! Everyone was very nice here and I liked the competition a lot. I will return next year, I am very happy with everything that is happening here"*, stated Tomas Visnovský, who, despite the fatigue, could have been seen smiling most of the times by the audience.

His compatriot Matej Ulik passed the Finish line the second, after just 4 minutes, and he was keeping very close to Tomas throughout the competition, forming a team, even if it is an individual contest. *"It was again very hard, but I'm glad I arrived the second. Tomas was much stronger than us, the other competitors. I think it is a good training and a very good place won."*

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The race was very well organized, the mountains are very beautiful, the views and the landscapes here are superb", said Matej Ulik, who then congratulated his colleague.

The third place was occupied by Márton Blazsó, who struggled hard to keep his place on the podium. The Hungarian champion has managed to stay with his feet on the ground and concentrate, as he promised he would. *"I am quite pleased, the two Slovak athletes were very strong. I was right behind them. I think I managed to get 3rd place in the overall ranking",* said Márton smiling.

The podium of the girls was dominated by the champions in Ukraine and Slovakia, and the order was the same as on Saturday. Krystyna Konvisarova crossed the Finish line with a 3-hour and 31-minute timing, followed by Janka Keseg Števková two minutes later. Andrea Juhásová and Hanna Verheles arrived much later. In the overall rankings of the CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC 2017 competition, the order of the winners is the following: 1st place - Janka Keseg Števková, from Slovakia, 2nd place - Krystyna Konvisarova and 3rd place - Hanna Verheles, both from Ukraine.

"It was pretty tough but I felt better than in the previous days. It's a good sign for me, I got into the rhythm. I knew I would not have another chance to win the competition. I liked it very much, the organization was very good, everyone is very nice and welcoming. It's the first time I came to Romania, but not the last one for sure! I really like what's going on here", confessed to us Krystyna Konvisarova, the champion of UCI MTB Marathon Series for the past two years.

The difficulty of the Stage 3 was given by the climbing through a rocky area with uneven roads to Bucsa peak, at 1,845 meters altitude, which separates the Bucegi Mountains from the Leaota Mountain. During the last stage, the winner of this edition, Janka Keseg Števková, chose such a rhythm in order to ensure her position: *"At first I tried to stay with Krystyna but I did not feel very well. She was stronger today. Of course, I would like to come back here, the organization was exceptional! Everything was perfect at this event, I'm glad that next year will be an UCI race! I hope I can come back here to compete".* Janka Keseg Števková has participated three times at the Olympic Games and Absa Cape Epic, the most popular stage competition in the world.

The news that next edition of **CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC** was confirmed as an [UCI](#) event came just this weekend. The 3-stage race date is announced in the official calendar, so the second edition will take place in the summer of next year, between **August 16 and 19, 2018**, also at the Cheile Gradistei - Fundata Resort. This will lead to another level of competition, and Romania will be promoted much more as a destination worth exploring on the international stage of cycling.

The Romanian cyclists performed admirably in this competition, appreciated by all the participants as the hardest they took part in. Lucian Logigan, Balkan and National Champion at XCO and one of the Sport Ambassadors of the event, said: *"I have a Finisher medal. I felt good today, especially on the second part of the route, the first part being very, very steep. I finished*

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on the fifth place, I pulled hard to recover and to be in a good position in the overall ranking. The three days were very difficult because of the route and the weather conditions".

On the Amateur level, the 4-day EPIC was won by Catriona Sutherland, from England and David Kecses, from Romania, the first riders in overall ranking. *"I loved it! I think I felt a lot stronger today, but you always do after a couple of days of rugged biking. I really enjoyed the mountain climbing, with the bike on my back, I'm quite used to do that. And then we've got to see across the mountains, it was beautiful! I would like to see more amateur women come and compete. It's a really tough race, but it's super rewarding and I think it's an amazing to see all the tracks and the trails and... see Romania! I will definitely recommend it to the people I know",* said Catriona Sutherland, who is an experienced mountain bike rider and guide and collaborator of several foreign publications, including Strongher.cc and International Mountain Bike Magazine.

In the last stage the weather was much better, giving contestants the opportunity to admire the stunning scenery of Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains, and the sun smiled on their arrival. Also, on Sunday, September 24, there was another race - [1-day Challenge](#), dedicated to those who couldn't take part in [4-day EPIC](#). The winners of the Amateur race are: Lucian Neaga (19+ years), Vasile Dorin Craciunescu (40+ years) and Valerie Cassecuelle (19+ years), all from Romania.

After the 3-day race, the MPG Romania organized the award ceremony for all champions. All the Elite winners received cash prizes ranging from 500 to 2,050 Euro and various products from the sponsors, whose total value reaches an estimated amount of **30,000 Euro**. The results of Stages 1, 2 and 3 can be found on the official page - click [here](#).

During the event, in the Start/Finish area, the cyclists had a specially designed tent by Gatorade for pre-race warming, but also a series of external circuits provided by Cheile Gradistei - Fundata Resort, a tent dedicated to technical checks and repairs made by Bicycle Ambulance - AmBike, and benefited from the BOSCH Bike Wash service, where the bicycles were cleaned every day. The energy and hydration of competitors was provided by Banca Transilvania with fresh drinks, GoldNutrition with special nutritional products and by Gatorade, which offered the sport drink in Race Village as well as on the routes. SUUNTO was presenting timing products useful in the contest. After the races, everyone had the chance to relax and to be entertained during the themed dinner parties supported by Tuborg and Kaufland X-trem: they ate traditional delicacies and told stories near a big campfire, and also enjoyed authentic Romanian music and folk dances. On trails, the hydration and energy points were provided by Kaufland X-trem and equipped with fruits, water, energy gels and Gatorade sport drink.

All the viewers and supporters watched LIVE for 3 days the whole action on Youtube and on [Facebook Riders Club](#), the Romanian biggest community of cyclists. Moreover, every night during September 22-24 were scheduled LIVE broadcasts on Pro X – Sport.ro, Telekom Sport

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and TVR HD summarizing the **CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC**. The cyclists’ evolution during the 3 stages can be watched on the official page www.carpathianmtb.ro – click [here](#).

The first edition of this Romanian stage race was supported by **Banca Transilvania** and **Gatorade**, the Official Sponsors of the event, together with the Official Suppliers and Partners Kaufland X-trem, BOSCH, GoldNutrition, World Class, SUUNTO and Cheile Gradistei Olympic-level Resort. The competition was sustained by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Waters and Forests, Romsilva, National Administrations of Piatra Craiului and of Bucegi Natural Parks, Romanian Cycling Federation, City Hall of Sinaia, Brasov County Council and the Carpatica Convention – Romanian Center, as well as by the Official Supporters: Tuborg and Krönenbourg 1664 Blanc, Mio Technology, Bicycle Ambulance - AmBike, Wild Romania and NTD Film. We can always rely on the help offered by the Media Partners that are giving us important support in transmitting the information: Pro X – Sport.ro, www.sport.ro, www.prosport.ro, Telekom Sport, TVR HD, KISS FM, Libertatea - Ringier, FreeRider.ro, eJobs, our recruitment partner, Biciclistul.ro, INGA Media, Comunicatedepresa.ro, Transilvania 365, Buna ziua BRASOV and BikeFM.ro. We are addressing special thanks to our talented photographers who faced the weather conditions to assure that cyclists will have some great visual memories to hold on later: *Janos Csaba Cherestes, Brindusa Mutoiu, Hila Tibi and Traian Olinici!*

We send all cyclists a lot of thanks for taking part at the first edition of **CARPATHIAN MTB EPIC** and we congratulate them for their great results! Thank you all for your support and trust!



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