



## Internazionali d'Italia Series, voice to the leaders of the general classification

*A few days before the final stage in Chies d'Alpago (BL), we put a few questions to the riders currently leading the general classification.*

On the last weekend of June, the fourth and decisive stage of the Internazionali d'Italia series, will take place in Chies d'Alpago (BL). A fundamental date to determine the winners of the general classification of the most important cross-country circuit on the Italian scene.

While we wait to find out who will wear the jersey at the end of the last of the four stages scheduled for 2024, we analysed some aspects of the event, now in its 22nd edition, with the 6 current leaders of the three categories.

All the athletes we interviewed have taken part in at least two Internazionali, and they all agree, as **Gioele Bertolini** says: *"The Internazionali d'Italia series is growing every year, both in terms of athletes and routes. I took part in two editions as a junior, four as an under and seven as an elite. What I enjoyed the most was competing on World Cup level courses and against opponents of the calibre of Avancini, Schurter, Forster and many others. If you want to race at the highest level, the tracks have to be up to scratch and I think the Internazionali d'Italia series is going in the right direction. Taking part in this event helps you to be competitive in the World Cup or other international races."* **Giorgia Marchet** who has taken part in 9 of them, agrees: *"Competing in the Internazionali is always good training for the Cup races and for keeping a good pace in the legs. I've been competing since I was a junior, so I've done 2 editions as a junior, 3 as an under-23 and this is the 4th as an elite. Once I even came close to winning, finishing 2nd. I have to say that the courses get better every year. My favourite is the one in San Zeno di Montagna, all natural, complete, always technical. I really like it."*

**Lucia Bramati's** relationship with the Internazionali d'Italia series, which began before she even started racing, is very interesting. The leader of the U23 classification told us: *"Thanks to my parents, even before I started racing I used to come and watch the races of my older teammates and became more and more passionate. This is my fifth year as an athlete. Each stage is designed to bring out the best in each of us, a perfect mix of technical passages and endurance. I really enjoy the atmosphere on and off the tracks and above all discovering new places every year that our Italy has and gives us"*.

The riders explained to us why the circuit is such an important event on their calendar, and not just because it helps them prepare for the World Cup, World Championships and Olympic Games, as **Tommaso Bosio**, the leader of the juniors, tells us: *"The Internazionali d'Italia series plays a fundamental role on my mtb calendar. Since I also train on the road, the number of mtb events is necessarily limited, but being here, at this event, has been a big goal of mine since the beginning of the season"*. The same goes for **Giorgia Marchet**: *"Internazionali is a very important event for me and for the team, in fact since the beginning of the season we have planned to take part in all the stages to try to win the overall classification."* **Matteo Siffredi** - leader of the U23 classification - concludes: *"For me it is important to race in Italy and I think the Internazionali has grown a lot, every year there is something different and more. The courses follow the trend of the WorldCup races, so it is important for me to race there, in fact I have included this event in my calendar for four years now, regardless of the commitments and objectives of the season"*.

The athletes' answers also highlighted the special atmosphere that prevails at these events. Lucia Bramati's comment is echoed by Giada Martinoli, the leader of the women's junior classification: *"What I like most about taking part in the Internazionali d'Italia series is discovering new tracks,*



comparing myself with other athletes and 'studying' the performances of foreigners, who you rarely meet on the track, especially in Italy. It is always a great thrill to be able to gain experience in intense and exciting races, as well as watching the races in the other categories. In addition, the environment and atmosphere during these competitions is always very exciting and engaging.

And as far as the jersey is concerned, they all said they were ready to defend it in the final stage in Chies d'Alpago on 29th June, a day that, as their words suggest, will be a mixture of competition and celebration:

**Gioele Bertolini** (KTM - Protek - Elettrosystem): *"To be the leader of the championship is something of pride for me, but also for the team and our sponsors, who allow us to give our best at every event. I am expecting a difficult race in which I will have to suffer without making too many calculations, because only a few points separate me from Filippo Fontana and both he and I want to wear this jersey at the end of the race."*

**Giorgia Marchet** (KTM - Protek - Elettrosystem): *"It's going to be exciting, especially for me because I'll be riding practically at home. I'll have two reasons: the final classification and to make a good impression on my fans who will come to see me. I won the first Italian U23 championship on this course, so I have great memories. What is certain is that I will have to give 110% to wear the jersey at the end, but in sport you always have to believe. I will try to give everything and enjoy it without putting too much pressure on myself."*

**Lucia Bramati** (Trinx Factory Team): *"It's going to be a spectacular stage, it's been a few years since I last raced the Chies d'Alpago, it's always been a tough stage where you need your head and your legs above all else, but I know we're going to have fun. We will be coming back from two weeks of World Cup racing, so our condition will be improving and I will certainly tackle it as I have tackled all the other stages, with determination and concentration, never forgetting to have fun. To be able to play for the final victory means a lot, especially for an athlete like me who knows all the work that goes into the organisation of each stage and therefore the whole race".*

**Matteo Siffredi** (Scott Racing Team): *"This decisive stage will be even more important. Obviously I will do everything I can to keep the jersey, but I have no real strategy. I won't put any extra pressure on myself and I'll start with the same calmness as always. At the moment I can say that wearing the leader's jersey on all the stages is very nice. People learn to recognise you and the cheering increases, which is not to be underestimated."*

**Giada Martinoli** (Scott Racing Team): *"I have to admit that wearing the leader's jersey is a great emotion for me: it's proof that I'm doing well, that the effort I'm putting in is paying off, and it also makes me happy because it's a small recognition for my team and all the people who are helping me grow in the MTB world. Strategy will be fundamental to tackle the route in the best possible way, trying to have the right intuition and legs to beat the opponents. The adrenaline will certainly be very high, but I'll also think about having fun... for me, MTB racing is above all fun and passion".*

**Tommaso Bosio** (Ciclistica Trevigliese): *"I've raced the Chies d'Alpago in the past and it suits my approach, so I'm aiming to finish this event in style. It will be a very busy weekend because the next day I will take part in the Italian Road Racing Championships, another important event for me, but first I want to give a great performance in the last stage of the Internazionali d'Italia series."*