2021 World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge

About the concept

The 2021 World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge was created by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) and the international sports marketing agency Orsen SA to increase cancer awareness worldwide and raise funds for UICC in support of the global cancer community.

The event brought together several thousand cyclists and over 20 sports and entertainment celebrities on World Cancer Day (4th February) to compete in a number of virtual cycling races hosted on the platform Zwift (see full list below).

The celebrities kicked off the event with a unique race concept, which consisted of having four-time Olympic Gold medalist Sir Mo Farah racing on a running machine in Ethiopia while other stars cycled to overtake him on the virtual Zwift route of the Champs-Elysées on their bikes at various locations around the world.

The recording of the race was broadcast on 4th February globally, interspersed with the celebrities sharing their personal experiences with cancer. Interviews with and videos from members and partners of UICC highlighting the cancer community and their work on the ground completed the broadcast.

Six other races named "community rides" were staggered live throughout the day on 4th February with different starting times, offering Zwift subscribers the opportunity to join the challenge, at no additional cost, from anywhere in the world. They also had the opportunity to cycle shoulder-to-shoulder with the celebrities leading a particular community ride as captains. The race took place on the 28.6km "Magnificent 8" Zwift route (45-60mns race duration).
About the 2021 edition impact

✓ Creation of a brand new event format with significant media exposure

The concept of Sir Mo Farah being chased down by celebrities with different sporting backgrounds – rugby, long distance running, football, car racing, cycling and paralympics – made it a compelling and novel TV programme filled with suspense and emotion. Sir Mo Farah performed brilliantly and won the race, as other celebrities like Austin Healey were pedalling hard almost to catch him in the final line.

The celebrity race of the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge was presented by the BBC professional TV host Gaby Logan and broadcast by 19 TV channels, covering all regions of the globe and over 154 different territories, and in some case in prime time slots. It was also available on-demand on leading TV sports platforms and as re-runs over the weekend following World Cancer Day. Broadcasters included: SBS, Sony, DAZN, Eurosport, Fox Sports, TYC Sports, Sportsnet World, Ziggo Sport, Sky Sport Select, Kayo, Supersport Variety, Telenet, SNTV and Fubo Sports. The programme is now visible to all on the Solidarity Challenge YouTube channel.

The Solidarity Challenge received a lot of attention on social media, mainly through Instagram and Twitter, with a high social outreach for a first edition. These are estimated at 40M earn social media reach for Twitter and Instagram thanks to catchy cross videos and social media cards with celebrities, partners, broadcasts, cycling and football clubs, and any individuals taking part in the challenge or supporting someone racing in the community rides.

In terms of traditional media, the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge was covered in some notable outlets such as Africa News, MSN, El Universal and the Daily Mail, and featured on Eurosport’s national language websites.
Engaging a new audience in the World Cancer Day campaign: the cycling community

To maximise the participation of all cyclists registered on the Zwift platform, six different entry times were offered on World Cancer Day, so that anyone could join the community rides, from Auckland to San Francisco, over the 24h period. Each of the six rides was led by inspiring “ride captains” to galvanise the Zwift community and were planned as below:

- Ride 1 with Chris Mc Cormack: 6 pm Eastern Australian Time – Sydney (GMT/UTC +11)
- Ride 2 with Lucy Charles-Barclay: 6 pm Singapore Standard Time (GMT/UTC +8)
- Ride 3 with Fabian Cancellara: 6 pm Gulf/UAE Standard Time (GMT/UTC +4)
- Ride 4 with Mikel Landa: 6 pm Greenwich Mean Time (GMT/UTC +0)
- Ride 5 with Jack Haig: 6 pm Eastern Standard Time – New York (GMT/UTC -5)
- Ride 6 with Pelotonia and Doug Ulman: 6 pm Pacific Standard Time – Los Angeles (GMT/UTC -8)

More than 8,000 cyclists of the Zwift community joined in support of World Cancer Day from 71 different countries, covering a combined total of more than 100,000 kilometres (two and half times around the World!).

Participation of the UICC Board member Nick Grant from Cancer Research UK in the community ride

Participation of the UICC member partner: the National Cancer Center Korea in the community ride
✓ Partnering with celebrities to raise cancer awareness to a sports audience and beyond

In total, 34 celebrities, men and women of diverse sports, and entertainment profiles lent their support to the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge in different ways, by participating in the cycling events, engaging their social media communities, recording a video or organising podcasts to raise cancer awareness. Each celebrity was invited to customise a poster of the World Cancer Day campaign, using the theme “I Am, and I Will”, and to share it on social media to promote the event and the cause among their followers. Many also shared their personal stories about cancer during the celebrity race broadcast.

The celebrities who participated in the celebrity race and the community rides were:

- Valtteri Botteras, Racing car driver, Mercedes
- Fabian Cancellara, Cyclist (3x winner Tours de Flanders)
- Danny Care, rugby player (England National team player)
- Lucy Charles Barclay, Ironman challenge champion
- Rebecca Charlton, cycling commentator and TV presenter
- Lawrence Dellaglio, rugby player (Six Nations & World Cup Winner)
- Sir Mo Farah, runner (4x Olympic Gold medallist)
- Jack Haig, cycling, Le Col pro cycling club
- Austin Healey, rugby player (England National team player)
- Ada Hegerberg, international Football player (2018 Ballon d’Or)
- Tom Kristensen, motorsport racer (9-time 24h Le Mans world record winner)
- Ryan Jones, rugby player (Former Wales National team captain & Six Nations Winner)
- Mikel Landa, professional cycling rider in Bahrain Victorious cycling club
- Gabby Logan, TV presenter and former international gymnast
- Chris McCormack, triathlete, Ironman challenge champion
- Mike Peters, musician, The Alarm music group
- Robert Pirès, international Football (World & European Champion)
- Young Pyo Lee, Football player (National Korea team player and Dortmund, Germany)
- Paula Radcliffe, runner (3x winner London & NYC marathons)
- Lauren Steadman, Paralympian cyclist (Silver medallist & World Champion in 4×100m)
- Matt Stephens, cycling commentator and TV presenter
- Doug Ulman, pelotonia Chief Executive Officer
- In Chon Yu, South Korean Actor
- Diangelo Williams, US Football and NFL Player
The celebrities supporting the challenge and who shared videos motivating their social media followers to join the Solidarity Challenge are:

- Toby Alderweireld, Football player Tottenham UK
- Giorgio Chiellini, Football player, Juventus Italy
- Liv Cook, Freestyle Football player
- Maro Engle, Racing car driver, Mercedes
- Joe Hart, Football player Tottenham UK
- Pierre Hojbjerg, Football player Tottenham UK
- Deborah James, BBC podcast presenter
- Lucas Moras, Football player Tottenham UK
- Rita Ora, International Musician
- Shakira, International Musician
Engaging new partners and opening future funding perspectives

The World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge enabled UICC to create opportunities to collaborate with new partners in the global fight against cancer.

Organisations from different sectors connected for the first time with UICC and supported the launch of the first World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge with various levels of sponsoring.

**Zwift**, the official digital training partner, not only hosted the event on its platform but also provided technical resources, committed to a donation to cover the TV production cost of the celebrity race broadcast, and helped promote the event among its cycling community.

**Wahoo Fitness** provided celebrities with bikes and became the official indoor training partner. The specialised cycling equipment manufacturer **Le Col** joined as the official cycling apparel supporter with specially designed clothing, including official jerseys and caps.

**Powerbar** sponsored and promoted the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge to its community as the official nutrition partner.

**IWC Schaffhausen**, the worldwide known Swiss watches manufacturer, became the official timing partner. Amongst other assets, a branded race clock countdown was visible to the participants and the broadcast, press and social media audiences. IWC ambassadors such as Fabian Cancellara participated in elaborating a 21-day training programme specifically for participants in the community rides.

Trading companies also supported the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge and motivated staff members to participate as teams in the community rides. These companies, including **Cantor Fitzgerald**, **BGC** and **Simpson, Spence and Young**, were recognised as Solidarity Challenge supporters.

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**Paula Radcliffe**

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Recognitions of all partners were published on the official WCD Solidarity Challenge website, social pages, and broadcast.

✓ Stimulating and associating UICC members and partners to something new and exciting

UICC member organisations, partners and organizations from the WCD Advisory group also participated in the World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge. Some recorded video messages for the celebrity race programme broadcast; others were interviewed for the broadcast programme; and many supported the event via their social media channels.

These supportive UICC members and partners were:

- Basic Health International (BHI), USA
- Friends of Cancer Patients (FOCP), UAE
- Love, Hope Strength Foundation (LHS), USA
- The American University of Beyrouth, Lebanon
- The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA), South Africa
- World Cancer Research Fund International (WCRFI), UK

LHS, FOCP and WCRFI participation in the broadcast

CANSA promoting the Solidarity Challenge to its network
The National Cancer Center Korea (NCCK), another UICC partner, organised a team participation in the community ride in their offices, inviting two VIPs from South Korea: Mr In Chon Yu, an actor and former Minister of Culture and Tourism; and Mr Young Pyo Lee, a national Korea team football player. The two celebrities teamed up with NCCK’s new President, Dr Hong Gwan in the community ride. The team enjoyed a memorable experience pedalling together and were delighted to watch the broadcast of the celebrity race on SBS Sports, one of the most popular sports channels in South Korea.

"The National Cancer Center of Korea is a proud partner of UICC and has been honoured to join the first-ever World Cancer Day Solidarity Challenge. This action was an amazing and brilliant way to lend support to the cancer community and raise awareness about cancer during COVID-19. It no doubt increased the impact of cancer control globally."

Dr. Hong Gwan Seo, President, National Cancer Center Korea.

✓ Raising much needed funds for the global fight against cancer

The 2021 Solidarity Challenge edition allowed UICC to raise more than €250,000, through sponsoring, partnerships, broadcasts, merchandising and donations.

The collected funds collected will benefit UICC in supporting the global cancer community by providing training programmes, mentoring, advocacy guidance, workshops and knowledge exchanges. UICC has 1,200 member organisations representing almost every country in the world and helps them urge their respective governments to take action and ensure that comprehensive cancer programmes and services are a national priority.
Thank You.

PARTNERS

IWC Schaffhausen

wahoo

SUPPORTERS

ZWIFT

LE COL

PowerBar

SIMPSON | SPENCE | YOUNG*

ICON GROUP

PITCH MARKETING GROUP

bgc

DERDIDAS

Connor Broadley Wealth Management

NATIONAL CANCER CENTER

Amnesty International

Friends Of Cancer Patients

World Cancer Research Fund International