

SPORTING LEGENDS: IVAN BASSO

SPORT: CYCLING

COMPETITIVE ERA: 1999 - PRESENT

Ivan Basso (born November 26, 1977 in Gallarate, VA, Italy) is a professional Italian road bicycle racer.

Basso is among the best mountain riders in the professional field of the 2000s, and is considered one of the strongest stage race riders.



As an amateur, he finished second in the 1995 junior World Championships and his first big result was winning the U-23 World Championships in 1998, before he turned professional with Risso-Scotti Vinavil in 1999.

Here he won his first professional victories in the 2000 Regio Tour and in 2001 he moved to Fassa Bortolo under the guidance of sporting director Giancarlo Ferretti. He scored several notable victories in 2001, but the next two years were devoid of significant wins even though he had promising rides in the Tour de France.

In the 2002 edition of the Tour de France, Basso finished 11th overall and won the white jersey, the award presented to the rider best-placed in the general classification under 25 years old.

He impressed again in the 2003 Tour, finishing seventh overall in spite of receiving little help from his Fassa Bortolo team-mates, who dedicated their efforts in the first part of the race to help Alessandro Petacchi win four stages in the Tour.

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Ivan Basso is well-known for his never-say-die attitude whilst on a tour stage.

After Basso's promising start to his Fassa Bortolo career his relationship with Giancarlo Ferretti turned sour when Ivan Basso failed to respond well to the management methods of the "iron sergeant".

Ivan Basso moved to the Danish Team CSC in 2004, to take the role as team captain which Tyler Hamilton left vacant at the Team CSC outfit. Ivan Basso's weakness was the individual time trial and before the 2004 season he and teammate Carlos Sastre trained in a wind tunnel to improve their aerodynamic positioning on the bike. The time trial skills of Ivan Basso was one of the main points of improvements over the next years.

Basso looked impressive in the 2004 Tour de France, winning stage 12 ahead of eventual winner Lance Armstrong, but due to his relatively poor time trial results, he only finished 8th on the stage 16 time trial up the mountain Alpe d'Huez and 6th in the stage 19 time trial, for a combined loss of 5 minutes and 13 seconds.

His time loss on the last time trial effectively sent Basso down to third place, behind Andreas Klöden, and Basso finished 6:40 behind winner Lance Armstrong, who was a personal support of the Italian when Ivan Basso learned, during the 2004 Tour, that his mother had cancer, a disease Armstrong had survived.

Basso held his daughter in his arms as he was honored in Paris and was resilient about his chances of a future Tour win, and he ended the season, participating with the Italian team in the 2004 World Championships in Verona, helping fellow Italian Luca Paolini get a Bronze Medal.

At the 2005 Tour de France, apart from stage 10 (the first mountain stage) where he trailed Lance Armstrong by a minute, Ivan Basso was the only rider to keep up with the race leader in the mountains, and on occasion he tried to pressure Armstrong by going on the attack.

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Where he likes to beō Ivan Basso leading from the front!

Basso was still weaker in the time trials where he lost a collective 3:47 to Armstrong over two stages, and he placed second overall in the Tour, 4:40 behind Lance Armstrong. During the 2005 Tour de France, Basso signed a new 3-year contract with CSC running up to 2008, ending speculation that he might defect to Discovery Channel to take over after the then-retiring Lance Armstrong.

Career Highlights:

2000

Stage 1 and 3B, Regio Tour.

2001

Stage 1, Tour Méditerranéen.
Stage 5, Bicicleta Vasca.
Stage 5, Österreich Rundfahrt.

2002

11th Overall, 2002 Tour de France.

2003

7th Overall, 2003 Tour de France.

in the pocket, often sliding a step or two to avoid the pass rush.

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Scott Burton's Final Thought

Ivan Basso has always been a great competitor, although he is somewhat of a controversial character.

Like all Italians, his passion is his driving force - and he has certainly worked hard to achieve all of his success.

Like many of today's top cyclists, he has had his fair share of accusations of being on the sauce.

He has been caught out for it as well, serving a ban for EPO abuse a couple of years back. However, I don't think it's fair to judge his career on this alone, as he is competing in a sport which is totally rife with drug abuse.

He is a great cyclist, and races for Italy with reverend pride. He will certainly be remembered as a true sporting legend.



Ivan The Terrible strikes again with another victory!