

VareseNews

The pride of Ivan Basso. "I'll be a protagonist once more."

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From our correspondent – The lump in his throat, after the Stelvio Pass, **had gone after a night of rest**, and after he had felt the affection of the people, who, in Milan, had begun to cheer him, from the warm-up (**see photo**), as though he were still wearing the 2010 pink jersey.

Ivan Basso had had a dignified time trial, and with a more tranquil face, he answered journalists' questions, without the fear of admitting his defeat. At the same time, **he spoke of the future, of his continuing to race**. "As I said, yesterday, on the Stelvio, this Giro d'Italia hasn't gone as my team and I had hoped, but **this isn't the end of an era. This isn't the day of my funeral**; you're still going to have to wait for that."

With determination, the champion from Varese rejected the criticisms of his racing style. "**I've won two Giro d'Italia's, and with the same style**. Everything went well until Cortina, and we didn't think it would end like this. I had two days of poor performance, it wasn't a crisis; I lost a bit of ground from the leaders, but I didn't fall apart. So no complaints about my tactics or those of the Liquigas-Cannondale team."

In the meantime, the near future has already been written. "This year, too, **I'm taking part in the Tour**; this was my intention, irrespective of how the Giro went, because **I want to help Nibali**, who, I think, could be among the top three in France. But irrespective of how 2012 continues, I repeat: **this isn't my last Giro as a protagonist**."

To finish, Basso made a few considerations. The first, when he saw the awarding of the first three. "Making it to that podium is a great thrill, a pleasure I've had twice. I have to say that **Hesjedal and Rodriguez deserve it because they've been the strongest**, just like De Gendt, with his performance at the Stelvio." The second was the Italians, who have been dethroned by the foreigners. "I agree with what Scarponi said; if there are no Italians on the podium, it doesn't mean there aren't many of us, but that we've found better opponents than us, this year." And to those who are wondering why, apart from him, Scarponi and Nibali, there are no other Italians capable of competing in the great stage races, Basso said, "I can't tell you why there are only a few of us, but I can assure of one thing. With me, in the Liquigas team, there are **Damiano Caruso and Moreno Moser** (the latter did not take part in this Giro, ed.), who are gaining experience and are continually getting better. I think they're going to be real stars in the future." Important words, of a true captain, which he can always find, in victory and in defeat. Such words that have gained him the trust of his companions, irrespective of the negative result.

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