

MTB World Cup XC #6 & DH #4 - CDM
Mont Sainte Anne, Canada, July 25-27, 2008

July 26: Elite women 4X
World champion Buhl wins

By Sue George in Mont-Sainte-Anne, Québec – cyclingnews.com

Clad in her rainbow striped jersey, Melissa Buhl (KHS) advanced through the semi-finals and went on to win the finals in the elite women's race. She defeated Mio Suemasa (MS-Intense Factory Racing), Fionn Griffiths (Norco World Team) and Anneke Beerten in the big final. Beerten crashed in the final, but managed to get up and ride to the finish.

"I had an outside lane choice which gave me a disadvantage from the start," said the American winner Buhl. "I had a lot of track to make up there. Anneke had a good start but then she slid out." The turn in question one was the only turn with two options, according to Buhl.



Melissa Buhl (KHS) was happy
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

"If you stayed below the lower rock," said Buhl, "you could get on the inside. Problem was we ran out of real estate, and I almost missed the blue gate. It was a bit of a scramble, but I'm glad I didn't miss it and was able to get out." On that turn, where Beerten crashed, Buhl came underneath to make a pass. "I was in front of her when she crashed. I'm not sure what happened."

"It happened so quickly," said last year's winner Beerten. "Melissa came under me hard, and maybe I went by, but it is 4X and it happens."

The Dutch woman was clearly disappointed. "I'm bummed because I felt really good in qualifications when I was able to do all the jumps. I really wanted to go for it." Fortunately, she was ok after her crash, during which she hit her head and suffered a minor ankle injury.

After Beerten's crash, Buhl rode away to the finish. Suemasa chased her, but couldn't make up ground despite her best efforts.

"It was a good run although I was bummed to see my team-mate crash during it. She just washed out. I just couldn't catch Melissa," said Suemasa, but she didn't blame Beerten's crash. "I did not get slowed down by the crash."

The weather caused the 4X qualifications to be postponed from Friday evening until Saturday and they were sandwiched between the downhill finals and the 4X finals. Plenty of rain in the days previous had super saturated the course with water, which caused damage like ruts and mud holes and soft approaches to jumps. Some of the jumps' approaches were covered with plywood for a more solid take-off.

"We were all kind of thinking that we weren't going to race 4X, but I'm glad we did," said Buhl, who had expressed doubt about competing earlier in the day along with concerns about safety on the damaged course. Organizers had personnel working early Saturday to make repairs.

"For the level of water they got, they did a good job with what they had," said Buhl. "The changes they made were really smart - they listened to the riders. It was good racing.

Anita Molcik (4 Elements Yeti) won the small final ahead of Caroline Buchanan, Eva Castro Fernandez and Neven Steinmetz.



World Champions Rafael Alvarez De Lara Lu and Melissa Buhl
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

Results

1	Melissa Buhl (USA)	0.50.28
2	Mio Suemasa (Jpn) MS-Intense Factory-Racing	
3	Fionn Griffiths (GBr) Norco World Team	
4	Anneke Beerten (Ned) MS-Intense Factory-Racing	
5	Anita Molcik (Aut) 4 Elements Yeti/Hotec/RSP	
6	Caroline Buchanan (Aus)	
7	Eva Castro Fernandez (Spa)	0.03.33
8	Neven Steinmetz (USA)	0.05.19

Teams

1	MS-Intense Factory-Racing	50 pts
2	Team Sunn	35
3	Commencal - Furious - Oakley Team	26
4	Norco World Team	25
5	Suzuki-Rb	22
6	Animal Commencal	20
7	Kenda Tomac	18
8	4 Elements Yeti/Hotec/RSP	15
9	Tomac Factory Racing	5