

MTB World Cup XC #9 & DH #7 - CDM Schladming, Austria, September 11-14, 2008

Race 3 - September 12: Elite men 4X
Protest delays finals

By Luke Webber in Schladming – www.cyclingnews.com

Under heavy rains and in the most bizarre circumstances, the four cross World Cup Finals will not be remembered for close racing or a battle to the final, but rather for Roger Rinderknecht's protests.

In the semi-finals, Rinderknecht claimed Romain Saladini (Team Sunn) cut a flag and was not penalised - dumping the Swiss rider from the finals. What followed was an official protest and then an unofficial one, which consisted of Rinderknecht walking up the start straight and refusing to let the final start.

After 15 minutes, the decision was finally taken that the original result would stand and Rinderknecht was to ride in the small final only - a race he ran away with, crossing the line with his hands over his eyes, still clearly angry about a decision which cost him a shot at the win.

More controversially, it was Saladini who went on to win the final in a thrilling race. Within the first 50 meters Jakub Hindak and Joost Wichman (Cannondale Factory Racing) collided, leaving Dan Atherton (Animcal Commencal) to pass Saladini on the first corner. The Frenchman Saladini, however, had in mind Atherton's weakness - a longer sweeping bend halfway down the track, on which Atherton had been struggling all night. Saladini made his move here and despite a desperate attempt on the lower reaches of the course, Atherton could not overtake him for the win.

The battle for the overall World Cup series was decided far earlier in the evening. When Rafa Alvarez took an early exit in the quarter finals, there were rumours the World Champion's luck had run out. Obviously not enjoying the rain and sporting a black jacket for the heats, the pressure fell to title contender Guido Tschugg.

Paired against Atherton and Cedric Gracia (Commencal - Furious - Oakley Team) - who had been racing aggressively all night - Tschugg was bullied out of the race

in the first corner as Gracia made an impossible pass from fourth to second. By the finish, Hnidak had profited from Gracia and Tschugg's battle which ultimately benefited neither rider.

Alvarez, in his first international campaign, has captured the clean sweep in four cross by winning both the World Championship and World Cup. Next year it will be interesting to see if his dominant form continues with the return of Michal Prokop and Jared Graves.



Alvarez completed the clean sweep with his final podium
Photo ©: Luke Weber

Results

Big Final

- 1 Romain Saladini (Fra) Team Sunn
- 2 Dan Atherton (GBr) Animal Commencal
- 3 Joost Wichman (Ned) Cannondale Factory Racing
- 4 Jakub Hnidak (Cze)

Small final

- 5 Roger Rinderknecht (Swi)
- 6 Kamil Tatarkovic (Cze) Suzuki-RB
- 7 Aurélien Giordanengo (Fra)
- 8 Jurg Meijer (Ned)

1/4 finals

- 9 Cedric Gracia (Fra) Commencal - Furious - Oakley Team
- 10 Rafael Alvarez De Lara Lucas (Spa)
- 11 Georg Sieder (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team
- 12 Johannes Fischbach (Ger) Team Ghost International
- 13 Guido Tschugg (Ger)
- 14 Matej Vitko (Svk)
- 15 David Graf (Swi)
- 16 Lukasz Baran (Pol)

1/8 finals

- 17 Scott Beaumont (GBr) Rocky Mountain UK
- 18 Quentin Derbier (Fra)
- 19 Rastislav Pirman (Svk) 4 Elements Yeti/Hotec/Rsp
- 20 Lewis Lacey (GBr)
- 21 Filip Polc (Svk) Kenda Tomac
- 22 Marek Pesko (Svk)
- 23 Felix Beckeman (Swe)
- 24 Will Longden (GBr) Team BikeRadar
- 25 Pascal Seydoux (Swi)
- 26 Markus Pekoll (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team
- 27 Sascha Meyenborg (Ger)
- 28 Lukas Mechura (Cze) Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense
- 29 Florian Gottschlich (Ger)
- 30 Joey Van Veghel (Ned)
- 31 Adrian Weiss (Swi) Tomac Factory Racing
- 32 Markus Sedlak (Aut)

1/16 finals

- 33 John Swanguen (USA) MS-Intense Factory-Racing
- 34 Tomas Slavik (Cze)
- 35 Peter Prajczar (Hun)
- 36 Adrian Kiener (Swi)
- 37 Tilen Frank (Slo) Team Scott Lactat
- 38 David Axelsson (Swe)
- 38 Georg Engel (Aut)
- 40 Bernard Kerr (GBr)
- 41 Tom Dowie (GBr)
- 42 Nico Vink (Bel) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team
- 43 Matej Stapic (Slo) Team Enduro Mulisha

44 Krisztian Meszaros (Hun)
45 Werner Muther (Swi)
46 Stephen Taylor (GBr)
47 Robert Kulesza (Pol)
48 Duncan Ferris (GBr)
49 Hannes Slavik (Aut)
50 Tomas Haluza (Cze)
51 Stepan Tumpach (Cze)
52 Adam Stasek (Cze)
53 Thomas Bubla (Aut)
54 Martin Frei (Swi)
55 Pascal Furrer (Swi)
56 Grzegorz Borodajko (Pol)
57 Luka Novak (Slo) Team Enduro Mulisha
58 Lukas Jaeger (Swi)
59 James Norton (GBr)
60 Zdenek Nasinec (Cze)
60 Walter Zeidler (Aut)
60 Stefan Maderthaner (Aut)
63 Mathieu Troquier (Fra) Solid Aclass Factory Team
64 Boris Tetzlaff (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team

Qualifications

65 Fabian Kuttel (Swi)
66 Peter Roschner (Aut)
67 Ales Rogozan (Cze)
68 Nico Seidel (Ger)
69 Piotr Paradowski (Pol)
70 Mirco Weiss (Swi)
71 Nicolas Gspan (Swi)
72 Frans Sjoblom (Swe)
73 Jakub Koutny (Cze)
74 Bostjan Pisanec (Slo)
75 Ole Hahn (Ger)
76 Stepan Novotny (Cze)
77 Michael Garcia (Ned)
78 Patrick Campbell-Jenner (GBr)
79 Jordan Gould (GBr)
80 Martin Buck (Swi)
81 Sorin Mircea Parau (Rom)
82 Jan Poric (Slo)
83 Nikolay Pukhir (Rus)
84 Sergey Maltsev (Rus)
DNF Ziga Knez (Slo)
DNS Matthew Simmonds (GBr)
DNS Oskar Harnstrom (Swe)

Teams

1 Suzuki-RB
2 Team Sunn
3 Animal Commencal
4 MS-Intense Factory-Racing
5 Cannondale Factory Racing
6 Norco World Team
7 Commencal - Furious - Oakley Team
8 Solid Aclass Factory Team
9 Team Ghost International
10 Suspension Center