

Silves, POR- 18-19.4.98- XC#2-

Pezzo Back on Top

Paola Pezzo (ITA, Gary Fisher) put on a powerful display of climbing to overtake rival **Alison Sydor** (CAN, Volvo-Cannondale) in both today's race and the overall world cup standings. **Alison Dunlap** (USA, GT) finished third for the second time in as many races, with **Laurence Leboucher** (FRA, Peugeot LaPoste) and **Margarita Fullana** (ESP, Mt. Dew/Specialized) rounding out the top five.



Beginning the four-race spring round of the cross country mountain bike world cup, this was a five-lap endurance test which lasted just over two hours. Aware of the demands this tough course would serve up, the women started slowly. While Dunlap, Pezzo, Fullana and Sydor

lead the parade starter lap, it would be hours before these same women would finish the race still in front - albeit in different order.

Going into the first full lap, **Jimena Florit-Juarez** (ARG, Headshok) briefly led the field before Sydor took over. Fifteen minutes into the race, Sydor and Dunlap led Pezzo by several seconds. After losing Dunlap on the descents, Sydor looked to put time on Pezzo and rode hard toward the end of the lap. On the final descent into the start/finish, however, she crashed and lost her lead. Not far behind, Pezzo passed Dunlap and began chasing Sydor in earnest.

Pezzo caught the Canadian and powered into the lead on lap two, on the climb up to the course's highest point. Dunlap chased at 30 seconds, while Fullana and **Chantal Daucourt** (SUI, Trek Volkswagen) led a group two minutes back. By the top of lap two, Pezzo had opened a 12 second gap from Sydor. *"I was very strong on the climbs today, but Alison [Sydor] was faster on the flats,"* Pezzo later commented.

As the race passed the half way point, it was clear that Pezzo was maximising her climbing advantage, and on the third lap increased the gap to Sydor by 25 seconds, with Dunlap about one minute back.

With victory in her sights, Pezzo continued to extend her lead and crossed the finish 1:22 ahead of Sydor and 3:02 ahead of Dunlap. It was an impressive ride for a rider who claims to be still below her best.

For Pezzo, today's win was a welcome return to the top, even if she doesn't feel in top form yet. *"It was very hard and steep!"*, she exclaimed. *"My legs felt good, but my back is still a bit weak and I don't really feel like I'm in top form yet."* Asked about her battle with Sydor, Pezzo said, *"she is very strong right now, but I saw her struggle a bit on the climbs, so I attacked. She gained on the flats, but I was strong on the climbs."*

Sydor, while disappointed to lose the Grundig/UCI series leader's Blue Jersey, remained optimistic. *"You look at where you're strong and try to limit your losses. It's tough for North Americans to come over here and race in the first event of these spring races, but I'm looking forward to Budapest. I don't think I was a full 100% today and had to gain my time where I could. It was tough crashing like that after the first lap, because you work so hard for every second, and to lose it all like that is hard."*



The other Alison - Dunlap - had another strong day for third place and was happy with her performance. *"I have a new way of thinking now" she smiled. "Now I think 'I've gotta catch Sydor,' where I used to think 'Who's going to catch me?'" I really feel like I belong up there now."*

Ari Cheren



Place	bib	UCIcode	Name/nom	team	Nat	time/temps	+
1	2	ITA19690108	PEZZO Paola	GARY FISHER	ITA	2:02:33.45	
2	1	CAN19660909	SYDOR Alison	VOLVO CANNONDALE	CAN	2:03:55.51	1:22.05
3	3	USA19690727	DUNLAP Alison	TEAM GT	USA	2:05:36.06	3:02.60
4	5	FRA19720222	LEBOUCHER Laurence	PEUGEOT LA POSTE	FRA	2:06:30.21	3:56.75
5	6	ESP19720409	FULLANA Margarita	MT DEW/SPECIALIZ	ESP	2:07:30.38	4:56.93
6	55	SUI19660623	DAUCOURT Chantal	TREK/VOLKSWAGEN	SUI	2:08:04.09	5:30.63
7	57	CAN19660316	REDDEN Christina	RITCHEY	CAN	2:08:20.28	5:46.82
8	9	FRA19690125	TEMPORELLI Sandra	PEUGEOT LA POSTE	FRA	2:09:13.24	6:39.79
9	11	AUS19710603	GRIGSON Mary	A.I.S.	AUS	2:09:39.59	7:06.13
10	27	NOR19730210	DAHLE Gunn-rita	AMERICAN EAGLE	NOR	2:10:08.44	7:34.98
11	8	ARG19720518	FLORIT-JUAREZ Jimena	HEADSHOK	ARG	2:11:18.32	8:44.86
12	4	GBR19680303	ALEXANDER Caroline	RITCHEY	GBR	2:12:04.26	9:30.80
13	61	SUI19640723	GASSMANN Daniela	WHEELER	SUI	2:12:56.83	10:23.37
14	67	SUI19701222	BLATTER Barbara	ARROW/BIRRRER	SUI	2:13:48.42	11:14.96
15	10	RUS19761202	EPIFANOVA Alla *	VOLVO CANNONDALE	RUS	2:15:40.15	13:06.70
16	62	GER19711227	SPITZ Sabine	TEAM KONA-EMS	GER	2:15:56.40	13:22.94
17	64	SWE19701227	JONSSON Annica	CRESCENT	SWE	2:16:29.40	13:55.95
18	16	CAN19730517	MCQUAID Melanie	ROCKY MOUNTAIN	CAN	2:17:21.15	14:47.69
19	15	CAN19591226	TOMLINSON Lesley	POLO SPORT	CAN	2:17:55.47	15:22.02
20	63	GER19711116	MICHELS-SMITH Andrea	IKO-CORRATEC	GER	2:18:09.95	15:36.49
21	59	ESP19671215	ROVIRA Silvia	MARIN SPAIN	ESP	2:18:10.64	15:37.19
22	37	GBR19700608	BRUNGER Tracy	K2 BIKE	GBR	2:18:39.05	16:05.59
23	18	SUI19610508	FÜRST Silvia	BE-ONE	SUI	2:18:40.87	16:07.41
24	35	GER19650904	ZU PUTLITZ Hedda	BE ONE	GER	2:19:09.00	16:35.54
25	25	SWE19720302	LINDBERG Madeleine	CRESCENT	SWE	2:19:22.05	16:48.59
26	73	ITA19730606	GOLDIN Annarita	CARRARO	ITA	2:19:45.26	17:11.80
27	60	GER19680826	MARUNDE Regina	VW/NUTZ./FZ./GT	GER	2:20:12.84	17:39.39
28	76	GBR19690413	ROWNTREE Isla	RALEIGH	GBR	2:20:34.65	18:01.20
29	65	ITA19591123	GRASSI Liuccia	CICLI MAGGI FAUS	ITA	2:21:25.57	18:52.11
30	71	GER19671001	JÜNGST Birgit	SCOTT/POLAR RACI	GER	2:21:30.61	18:57.15
31	68	FRA19690624	CLARET Daniele	EGS	FRA	2:22:02.01	19:28.56
32	58	GER19750708	RÖSCH Nora	K2 BIKE	GER	2:22:56.19	20:22.73
33	79	ESP19730927	PUIEGROS Janet	SACHS-JKPE	ESP	2:23:11.51	20:38.05
34	72	GBR19751119	COPNALL Jenny	BIKEPARK/RALEIGH	GBR	2:23:27.47	20:54.01

35	66 NED19730630	DORLAND Corine	DUTCH NATIONAL T	NED	2:25:51.24	23:17.78
36	78 BEL19710602	VAN DEUN Hilde		BEL	2:26:11.26	23:37.80
37	56 ITA19680704	STROPPARO Annabella	VOLVO CANNONDALE	ITA	2:26:25.24	23:51.79
38	75 NED19670206	RAVENSTYN Reza	DUTCH NATIONAL T	NED	2:29:37.46	27:04.00
39	74 FRA19680224	MARQUESTAUT Sylvie		FRA	2:36:25.88	33:52.43
40	69 BEL19641010	LAROY Lory	SMOUT RC	BEL	2:38:06.11	35:32.65
43	ITA19720406	DE NEGRI Nadia	BIANCHI MARTINI	ITA		DNF
44	GBR19650121	ROBINSON Louise	RALEIGH	GBR		DNF
70	ITA19721024	SALA Veronica	AVIOTEC FIOCCO G	ITA		DNF
85	FIN19680506	VIERULA Isa	FINLAND	FIN		DNS