

MTB World Cup XC #5 - CDM

St Felicien, Quebec, Canada, July 1, 2007

July 1: Elite Men Cross Country | Absalon takes World Cup crown

By Rob Jones – cyclingnews.com

Julien Absalon (Orbea) wrapped up the men's cross-country World Cup in St-Felicien, Quebec on Sunday with one race still to go. St-Felicien is a new venue for the World Cup, and a very successful one, judging from the comments of riders. Jose Hermida (Multivan Merida) called it "the best course of the year for the World Cup," and he was not alone in his praise. "This is wicked mountain biking," added Seamus McGrath (Rocky Mountain-Haywood), "it is one of the best races we have done."

Offering a mix of steep climbs and technical sections, the course required a rider to be totally focused, very fit and a superb bike handler. The men did one start loop and six laps of the 6.4 kilometre circuit. The start loop proved to be surprisingly difficult, opening with a very steep climb that immediately blew apart the field. A poor ride here left little chance to move up later.



Julien Absalon wins
Photo ©: Frank Bodenmuller

Unlike the women, the men had rain to contend with for the first half of their race, which made things slippery, particularly on the second steep climb. The men's race followed the same script as the women - two riders dropping the rest of the field and then battling for victory. Jose Hermida went to the front after the start loop, taking with him Balz Weber (Bikepark.ch). Absalon moved up to join Hermida on lap two as Weber faded, and the duo, who took gold and silver at the last Olympics, then rode away from the rest of the field.

The pair appeared to be near equal in strength, taking turns at the front on the climbs. It was still an open question as to who would win, with Hermida hit by mechanical problems on the fifth lap.



Jose Hermida
Photo ©: Frank Bodenmuller

"Just before the start of the last lap I could feel a problem in my chain, and then it broke after I was past the technical zone, so I had to stop and fix it," explained Hermida. "I was passed by a couple of guys and I had to re-pass them to get into second on the last lap. Before that last lap I was feeling really confident [for the win]. But it was still a pretty nice race for me: it's a good result and having regular top results shows what type of rider I am, which is important to me. I think the champion always has extra power in the legs, and sometimes the luck too."

"I saw him stopped when I went by the feed zone, so I attacked," commented Absalon. "But I didn't realize he had such a problem until my manager told me on the radio that I had one minute. It is impossible to say who was stronger, we were very even I think. But the win is very good, now the World Cup is done and I can prepare for the world championships with no extra pressure."

Absalon was clear and putting distance on his rival, while Hermida blasted past the two riders who had passed him - Fredrik Kessiakof (Cannondale-Vredestein) and Ralph Naef (Multivan Merida) - to reclaim second place. Kessiakof and Naef took third and fourth, with Jakob Fuglsang (Cannondale-Vredestein) taking the final podium spot ahead of U23 world champion Nino Schurter (Swisspower).

Adam Craig (Giant) had his second consecutive World Cup top 10 with a 10th place finish, with Seamus McGrath (Rocky Mountain-Haywood) and Geoff Kabush (Maxxis) the only other North Americans to crack the top-20, in 18th and 20th places respectively.

Race note:

- The UCI has released the World Cup schedule for next season (the earliest ever release date), and there are two North American dates, both in Canada, with one Mont Ste Anne and the other still to be decided. The series has nine cross country stops and seven downhill/4-cross. There are six triples. After three European races in April/early May there is a break until June, after which action is pretty steady until the end of July, with the world championships in Italy in late June. The Canadian stops are the last ones before the Olympics in late July/early August. Post-Olympics there is a stop in Canberra, Australia, site of the 2009 Worlds, and the final back in Europe in September.



The top five
Photo ©: Frank Bodenmuller

Results

1	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	2.07.05
2	Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	1.18
3	Fredrik Kessiakoff (Swe) Cannondale-Vredestein	1.55
4	Ralph Naef (Swi) Multivan Merida Biking Team	2.50
5	Jakob Fuglsang (Den) Cannondale-Vredestein	3.00
6	Nino Schurter (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	4.37
7	Balz Weber (Swi) Bikepark.Ch Tui	4.41
8	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) MBC Bochum	4.53
9	Lado Fumic (Ger) Fumic.Brothers.International	5.15
10	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	5.39
11	Roel Paulissen (Bel) Cannondale-Vredestein	5.55
12	Florian Vogel (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	6.03
13	Filip Meirhaeghe (Bel) Versluys-Landbouwkrediet	6.06
14	Cedric Ravanel (Fra) Team Lapierre International	6.16
15	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized	6.32
16	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	6.41
17	Christoph Soukup (Aut) Fuji	6.52
18	Seamus Mcgrath (Can) Rocky Mountain Haywood	7.04
19	Jader Zoli (Ita) Asd Ktm International Team	7.07
20	Geoff Kabush (Can) Maxxis	7.26
21	Ricky Federau (Can)	7.40
22	Bas Peters (Ned)	7.53
23	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	
24	Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	8.16
25	Milan Spesny (Cze) Merida Biking Team	8.33
26	Valeriano Rubens Donizeti (Bra)	8.34
27	Karl Platt (Ger) Team Bulls	8.48
28	Stefan Sahm (Ger) Team Bulls	
29	Emil Lindgren (Swe) Gewiss Bianchi	9.01
30	Manuel Fumic (Ger) Fumic.Brothers.International	9.14
31	Marco Aurelio Fontana (Ita)	9.50
32	Jochen Kass (Ger) Team Alb-Gold Mountainbike	9.55
33	Ricardo Pscheidt (Bra)	10.12
34	Nicolas Bazin (Fra) Bh-Sr. Suntour	10.46
35	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Dolphin Bike Team	10.57
36	Peter Riis Andersen (Den) Team Alb-Gold Mountainbike	11.02
37	Robin Seymour (Irl)	11.16
38	Kashi Leuchs (NZl) Cannondale-Vredestein	11.20
39	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	11.28
40	Max Plaxton (Can) Rocky Mountain Haywood	11.41
41	Jiri Friedl (Cze) Merida Biking Team	11.52
42	Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spa) Spiuk-Tau Ceramica	12.07
43	Burry Stander (RSA) GT	12.13
44	Hannes Metzler (Aut)	12.36
45	Klaus Nielsen (Den) Team Alb-Gold Mountainbike	12.59
46	Derek Zandstra (Can) 3 Rox Racing / Scott	13.04
47	Carl Decker (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	13.16
48	Michael Broderick (USA) Kenda Seven	13.17
49	Neal Kindree (Can) Kona Les Gets	13.18
50	Marti Gispert Labarta (Spa) Spiuk-Tau Ceramica	13.27
51	Olivier Maignan (Fra) Bh-Sr. Suntour	13.30
52	Miha Solar (Slo)	13.44
53	Edivando Cruz (Bra)	13.53
54	Tim Heemskerk (Ned)	14.02
55	Kris Sneddon (Can) Kona Les Gets	14.09
56	Filip Eberl (Cze)	14.16
57	Oleksandr Yakymenko (Ukr)	14.17
58	Kenji Takeya (Jpn)	14.57
59	Chris Jongewaard (Aus) Dolphin Bike Team	
60	Todd Wells (USA) GT	16.00
61	Andrew Watson (Can) TEAM R.A.C.E.	16.49
62	Sid Taberlay (Aus) Dolphin Bike Team	17.22
63	Christof Bischof (Swi) Bikin'cyprus Int'l MTB Team	17.38
64	Cristobal Silva (Chi)	17.51
65	Sergiy Rysenko (Ukr)	18.03

66 Michael Weiss (Aut) Bikin'cyprus Int'l MTB Team	18.12
67 Raphael Gagne (Can) Rocky Mountain Haywood	18.49
68 Niall Davis (Irl)	19.21
69 Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Beone Mountainbiketeam	20.35
70 Lee Williams (GBr)	21.42
71 Andreas Kugler (Swi) Fischer-BMC	31.58

One lap behind

72 Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher
73 Benoit Simard (Can) Specialized Canada
74 Maxim Gogolev (Rus)
75 Frederic Bussieres (Can)
76 Roddi Lega (Can) United Cycle
77 Stuart Houltham (NZl)
78 Colin Cares (USA)
79 Martin Lazarski (Can) Rocky Mountain Haywood

Two laps behind

80 Pierre Lebreton (Fra) Bh-Sr. Suntour

Three laps behind

81 Dror Pekatch (Isr) Subaru-Gary Fisher
82 Justin Price (NZl)

Four laps behind

83 Sam Jurekovic (USA)
DNF Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra) Orbea
DNF Torsten Marx (Ger) Team Alb-Gold Mountainbike
DNF Jan Skarnitzl (Cze)
DNF Mathieu Toulouse (Can) Maxxis
DNF Conor Mcconvey (Irl)
DNF Jeff Hall (USA)
DNF Alexandre Moos (Swi) BMC Racing
DNF Eric Drower (NZl)
DNF Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita)
DNF Matthew Hadley (Can) Rocky Mountain Haywood