

# MTB World Cup XC #7 & DH #5 - CDM

**Bromont, Canada, August 1-3, 2008**

## **Race 7 - August 3: Elite men cross country**

### **Absalon wins again**

*By Sue George in Bromont, Quebec – cyclingnews.com*

Julien Absalon (Orbea) rode smoothly and consistently for six laps to take a solo victory at the Bromont World Cup, just one week after his win at Mont-Sainte-Anne. Lukas Flückiger (Athleticum) spent a majority of his race in no-man's land in pursuit of French National Champion Absalon. For a time he seemed to fade, but he hung tough to finish second while Team Giant's Adam Craig ended up third.

Absalon was not deterred when he saw the rain in the morning. "I was happy," he smiled. "If it rains, it's good. If it doesn't rain, it's good. I like when it's muddy like this because I live in the north of France, so I ride a lot in similar conditions."

Absalon knew from experience where he wanted to be during the race. "I think in these conditions, it's better to be in front because you can choose your line on the singletrack," he said. "It was important today to not fall so it was better to be alone because you can go like you want."



Julien Absalon (Orbea)  
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

The French National Champion's brakes and shifters were filled with mud, but everyone suffered the same problems. Absalon was selective about when he walked and when he rode. "Sometimes it's faster to walk than to ride," he said. "Also, if you go slow on the bike while riding, you catch all the mud on your bike."

The Swiss Flückiger said the key to his race was riding his own pace. He appeared to start well, bog down in the middle portion of the race and then perk up near the end, when his second place looked secure, barring any mishaps.



The peloton heads up Bromont Mountain  
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

Craig raced to third in his best-ever World Cup finish. He credited his third place to riding a full suspension - his new Anthem X with more mud clearance and different suspension design and more linear travel - which let him rest on the technical singletrack sections.

"I was able to deal with the conditions effectively so it was good," said Craig. "I wouldn't call it 'enjoyable', but it was pretty fun."

"There were sections of the course that were cool," said Craig, who has been training through both of the Canadian World Cup races. "All that traversing stuff is like what I grew up riding in Maine - just a bunch of burly flat, weird stuff that's hard to find a rhythm."

Geoff Kabush (Team Maxxis), the only other top finisher to ride a full suspension, finished fourth. At times during the race, the Canadian racer was "as far back as 10th or 12th", but he kept up his pace in what became a race of attrition for many. "I think people went out too hard, especially those on hardtails," said Kabush. "I knew it would be a long race so I kept it steady. On one lap near the end, I moved up four spots."

"I thought I might have a chance at Adam, but it's one of the few times he was able to hold me off, so it's good to see he was riding really strong as well," added Kabush. "A lot of people were talking about the tough singletrack, and we don't usually race that, but I ride that all the time. It was my favourite part of the track today. It's where I could rest a bit and find a rhythm."

Jose Antonio Hermida (Multivan Merida) led the bunch on the first half lap, but he couldn't hold the blistering pace and as the race went on, he dropped a few places. The Spaniard's ride was still good enough for a fifth place finish, and he said he had recovered well from last weekend's crash.



Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Multivan Merida)  
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

Hermida said poor tire choice made his race tough. "Before the start, it was raining the whole time so I thought I'd use dry tires," he said. "If it is still raining during the race, with dry tires you can be fast because the water cleans the mud. But before the start the weather changed and it stopped raining so the mud started to dry and get heavier and thicker.

"I spent so much energy just to move the bike with the tires I picked, but I'm happy to come back again to the podium. I felt good," he added. "Even more important, it's the first time I grew a moustache and got on the podium."

American Todd Wells (GT Bicycles) put in his trademark fast start, before luck failed him. "I had a couple of flat tires," said Wells, who still ended up a respectable 10th. "After my good start, I flatted and lost a bunch of spots. Just as I started to make up some places, I flatted again at the end. I was feeling really good out there; I just had some bad luck."



Lukas Fluckinger (Athleticum)  
Photo ©: Dave McElwaine

Fellow American Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (Subaru / Gary Fisher) finished just one place behind Wells. "I was feeling really good for the first half and was fighting for podium spots [JHK was as high as sixth - ed.], but then I had a bad wreck, and I broke a couple of spokes in my rear wheel and hit my shoulder pretty hard on the fourth lap. I struggled a little from there until the end, but I'm happy."

South African Burry Stander (GT Bicycles) made it as high as fourth place, but then he lost a lot of ground quickly including five places on one lap with a little over two laps to go. Stander, who visited the podium last weekend, would finish 24th.

Although many of the racers were thinking of Beijing and riding cautiously to prevent injury, the race will no doubt serve as a confidence boost to those who did well - at least for verifying their fitness.

"This race is so irrelevant to Beijing," said Craig. "If Beijing was like this, I'd be pumped." He added, however, that he was pleased to see he was riding 3.5 minute behind Absalon instead of 5.5 minutes like last weekend.

"It is completely different than the Olympics, but it was interesting to see the level of the other guys and that I'm in good shape," said Absalon, who was still trying to decide his plans for the next two weeks before the big day in Beijing. "I don't know what I will do. I have two options. One is to stay in the north of France and the other is to go in the south of France to where there is hot weather because I think it will be important to train in high temperatures. It could be really hot in Beijing."

## Results

1	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	2.16.24
2	Lukas Fluckiger (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	2.14
3	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	3.46
4	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis	5.07
5	Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking	6.07
6	Martin Gujan (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	7.17
7	Jiri Friedl (Cze) Merida Biking Team	7.23
8	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze)	7.56
9	Liam Killeen (GBr) Specialized Factory Racin	8.01
10	Todd Wells (USA) GT Bicycles	8.39
11	Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	8.55
12	Hannes Metzler (Aut) Giant Mountain Bike Team	10.33
13	Cedric Ravanel (Fra) Team Lapierre Internation	11.27
14	Derek Zandstra (Can)	11.45
15	Seamus McGrath (Can)	13.45
16	Christoph Soukup (Aut)	15.23
17	Jeremiah Bishop (USA) Trek-VW	16.34
18	Karl Markt (Aut)	16.49
19	Carl Decker (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	17.05
20	Mathieu Toulouse (Can) Team Maxxis	18.17
21	Michael Broderick (USA)	18.52
22	Matthew Hadley (Can)	20.04
23	Cristobal Silva Ibaceta (Chi)	21.13
24	Burry Stander (RSA) GT Bicycles	21.21

### Behind one lap

25	Connor Mcconvey (Irl)
26	Eric Batty (Can)
27	Ola Kjren (Nor)
28	Daniel Sessford (Can)
29	Martin Fanger (Swi)
30	Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour
31	Matous Ulman (Cze)
32	Barry Wicks (USA) Kona
33	Kris Sneddon (Can) Kona
34	Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher
35	Craig Richey (Can)
36	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze)

### Behind two laps

37	Freddy Betremieux (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour
38	Raphael Gagne (Can) Rocky Mountain
39	Gareth Montgomerie (GBr)
40	Calle Friberg (Swe)
41	Francis Morin (Can)
42	Andrew Watson (Can)
43	Bas Peters (Ned)
44	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Central Ghost Pro Team
45	Spencer Paxson (USA)
46	Tad Elliot (USA)
47	Kenji Takeya (Jpn)
48	Frank Schotman (Ned)
49	Andrew Freye (USA)

### Behind three laps

50	Leni Trudel (Can)
51	Troy Wells (USA)
52	Cody Peterson (USA)
53	Pierre Lebreton (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour
54	Martin Loo (Est) Merida Biking Team
55	Ethan Gilmour (USA)
56	Anders Hovdenes (Nor) Team Etto Hoydahl

57 Timothy Madgwick (NZl)  
58 Ryan Atkins (Can)  
DNF Robin Seymour (Irl)  
DNF Max Plaxton (Can) Rocky Mountain  
DNF John Gray (NZl)  
DNF Julien Fillion (Can)  
DNF Josef Kamler (Cze) Ceska Sporitelna MTB  
DNF Kyle Douglas (Can)  
DNF Mitchell Peterson (USA)  
DNF Pablo Voigt Rodriguez (Mex)  
DNS Kashi Leuchs (NZl) Cannondale-Vredestein

**Team**

1 Giant Mountain Bike Team	63 pts
2 Athleticum-MTB-Team	61
3 Team Maxxis	41
4 Orbea	40
5 Multivan Merida Biking Team	28
6 GT Bicycles	28
7 Merida Biking Team	24
8 Specialized Factory Racing	22
9 Subaru-Gary Fisher	20
10 Team Lapierre International	18
11 Trek-VW	14
12 Bh-Sr. Suntour	1