

MTB World Cup XC #1 - CDM

Houffalize, Belgium, April 19-20, 2008

April 20: Elite men cross country,

Absalon takes maiden Houffalize victory

By Luke Webber in Houffalize, Belgium – cyclingnews.com

Julien Absalon opened the year of his Olympic title defence in perfect fashion by convincingly passing his first big test of 2008 and for the first time winning the riders favourite race. As the national anthem of France played Absalon's fan club brought the arena to life with their rendition of La Marseillaise as the tricolour rose.

From the start Absalon was in the lead group on a far drier course than the women had faced two hours earlier. There were however parts of singletrack that were cut up leaving exposed roots and ruts. Tyre choice was critical in these changing conditions along with a strong nerve and good bike handling skills.

Following the start loop a select group of seven riders formed, containing Absalon and his teammate Jean Christoph Peraud, Nino Schurter, Florian Vogel, Jose Hermida, Roel Paulissen and Cedric Ravanel. It was Schurter who got impatient first and struck in the singletrack on lap two getting a gap and splitting the group. It was only moments though until Absalon sensed danger from the under-23 rider and launched his own attack. Knowing the race was long with several brutal climbs per lap, Schurter preferred to stay at his own pace to finish a comfortable second.



Frenchman Julien Absalon (Orbea)
Photo ©: Luke Webber



Julien Absalon leads the
Photo ©: Luke Webber

The race for third was the hardest fought after the early flyers finished their stints on lap three it was time for the diesel engine of Christoph Sauser to make his way forward. A slipped pedal was the cause of his bad start, which was followed by some chain suck in the muddier sections but eventually he clawed back through the pack to take the final podium spot and important points for the series. This was not an ideal result but Sauser is looking forward to a quick succession of races where he can build on his form.

Last years winner Jose Hermida did not fare so well in the drying conditions and could only manage seventh, while Geoff Kabush repeated his 12th placing from last year thanks to a good grid position.

Top American was Todd Wells in eleventh who rode a superb five laps and at one stage just seconds from the lead group. Considering that all the GT team bikes were stolen the day before and new frames had to be built from scratch this performance showed no nerves in a stressful situation. He will be eager to race again in Offenburg with a stronger grid position and great confidence.

The riders have just one week now until Offenburg for round two of the cross country competition.

On another note, both of the Fumic brothers raced despite a doping charge from the UCI, with Lado finishing 35th and Manuel 67th.



The first lap lead group
Photo ©: Luke Webber

1	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	2.06.56
2	Nino Schurter (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	0.51
3	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Factory Racing	1.14
4	Jakob Fuglsang (Den) Cannondale-Vredestein	2.00
5	Ravanel Cedric (Fra) Team Lapierre International	2.37
6	Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra) Orbea	3.10
7	Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	3.33
8	Roel Paulissen (Bel) Cannondale-Vredestein	3.55
9	Kashi Leuchs (NZl) Cannondale-Vredestein	4.09
10	Martin Gujan (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	4.34
11	Todd Wells (USA) GT Bicycles / Pacific Cycle	5.16
12	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis	5.30
13	Marco Aurelio Fontana (Ita)	5.35
14	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	5.36
15	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	5.55
16	Graf JOrg (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	6.07
17	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	6.23
18	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr) Giant Mountain Bike Team	6.34
19	Florian Vogel (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	7.04
20	Yader Zoli (Ita) Giant Italia Team	7.05
21	Ralph Naef (Swi) Multivan Merida Biking Team	
22	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	7.16
23	Seamus McGrath (Can)	7.49
24	Christoph Soukup (Aut)	8.06
25	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze)	8.26
26	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	8.37
27	Fredrik Kessiakoff (Swe) Full-Dynamix-It	8.44
28	Tony Longo (Ita) Full-Dynamix-It	9.00
29	Lukas Fluckiger (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	9.31
30	Alexis Vuillermoz (Fra) Scott Valloire Galibier	9.33
31	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	9.34
32	Hannes Metzler (Aut) Giant Mountain Bike Team	9.49
33	Peter Riis Andersen (Den) Team ALB-Gold Mountainbike	9.52
34	Till Marx (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	9.55
35	Lado Fumic (Ger) Fumic.Brothers.International	10.09
36	Tim Bohme (Ger) Team ALB-Gold Mountainbike	10.18
37	Michael Weiss (Aut)	10.40
38	Daniel McConnell (Aus)	11.06
39	Martino Fruet (Ita)	11.17
40	Marc Trayter Alemany (Spa) Ecp-Tau Ceramica	11.23
41	Davy Coenen (Bel)	11.44
42	Karl Platt (Ger) Team Bulls	11.52
43	Patrik Gallati (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	12.03
44	Karl Markt (Aut)	12.11
45	Thomas Frischknecht (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	12.24
46	Milan Spesny (Cze) Merida Biking Team	12.31
47	Matthias Fluckiger (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	12.41
48	Emil Lindgren (Swe) Full-Dynamix-It	12.47
49	Bas Peters (Ned)	12.57
50	Gion Manetsch (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	13.09
51	Andreas Kugler (Swi) Fischer-Bmc	13.16
52	Ricky Federau (Can)	13.55
53	Jochen Kass (Ger) Team ALB-Gold Mountainbike	14.21
54	Sergio Mantecon Gutierrez (Spa) Cemelorca-Seguros10.Com	14.24
55	Frank Schotman (Ned)	14.31
56	Torsten Marx (Ger) Team ALB-Gold Mountainbike	14.32
57	Marek Galinski (Pol) JBG2-APC Presmet	14.47
58	Filip Meirhaeghe (Bel) Versluys-Landbouwkrediet MTB Team	15.06
59	Burry Stander (RSA) GT Mongoose / Pacific Cycle	15.15
60	Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	15.28
61	Barry Wicks (USA) Kona	15.37
62	Chris Jongewaard (Aus) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	15.57
63	Kristian Hynek (Cze)	16.09
64	Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spa) Ecp-Tau Ceramica	16.19
65	Mirko Pirazzoli (Ita)	16.33
66	Igor Bogdan (Ukr) Isd-International	16.42
67	Manuel Fumic (Ger) Fumic.Brothers.International	16.45

68	Frank Beemer (Ned)	16.50
69	Liam Killeen (GBr) Specialized Factory Racing	16.51
70	Silvio Bundi (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team	16.52
71	Lachlan Norris (Aus)	16.58
72	Rene Tann (Ger)	17.05
73	Mathieu Toulouse (Can) Team Maxxis	17.07
74	Lukas Kaufmann (Swi)	17.15
75	Filip Eberl (Cze)	17.20
76	Milan Barenysi (Svk)	17.23
77	Jeremiah Bishop (USA) Trek-VW	
78	Fabian Giger (Swi)	17.24
79	Hector Leonardo Paez Leon (Col) Gewiss Bianchi	17.30
80	Martin Fanger (Swi)	17.38
81	Bart Brentjens (Ned) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	
82	Israel Nunez Baticon (Spa) Massi	18.12
83	Umberto Corti (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D	18.35
84	Tim Wijnants (Bel) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	18.49
85	Steffen Thum (Ger) Team Mayer Stevens	18.53
86	Mattias Wengelin (Swe)	18.55
87	Dario Alejandro Gasco (Arg) Massi	18.58
88	Derek Zandstra (Can)	19.10
89	Pascal Meyer (Swi)	19.16
90	Stéphane Tempier (Fra) Gewiss Bianchi	19.20
91	François Bailly Maitre (Fra) Scott Valloire Galibier	19.22
92	Magnus Darvell (Swe)	19.30
93	Marcin Karczynski (Pol) Halls Professional MTB Team	19.41
94	Kohei Yamamoto (Jpn)	19.48
95	Maxim Gogolev (Rus)	20.03
96	Stefan Sahm (Ger) Team Bulls	20.19
97	Hannes Genze (Ger) Team ALB-Gold Mountainbike	20.32
98	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze)	20.43
99	Daniel Suter (Swi)	20.58
100	Severin Disch (Swi)	21.19
101	Sergiy Rysenko (Ukr) Isd-International	21.29
102	Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam	21.48
103	Nicolas Bazin (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour	22.12
104	Javier Puschel (Chi)	
105	Ivan Planzer (Swi)	22.35
106	Michel Luginbuehl (Swi)	22.48
107	Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour	23.46

One lap down

108	Joris Massaer (Bel)	
109	Cristobal Silva (Chi)	
110	Robert Gehbauer (Aut) Multivan Merida Biking Team	
111	Michael Broderick (USA)	
112	Ross Creber (GBr)	
113	Robert Mennen (Ger)	
114	Thomas Litscher (Swi)	
115	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Central Ghost Pro Team	
116	Alban Lakata (Aut) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	
117	Pierre Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Team Lapierre International	
118	Ian Field (GBr)	
119	Denis Vorontsov (Rus)	
120	Mannie Heymans (Nam)	
121	Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita)	
122	Massimo De Bertolis (Ita) Full-Dynamix-It	
123	Matous Ulman (Cze)	
124	Samuele Porro (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D	
125	Mattias Nilsson (Swe)	
126	Ji Jianhua (Chn)	
127	Patxi Cia Apezteguia (Spa)	
128	Sepp Freiburghaus (Swi)	
129	Pierre Lebreton (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour	
130	Markus Bauer (Ger)	
131	Julio Humberto Caro Silva (Col) Gewiss Bianchi	
132	Arnaud Grosjean (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour	
133	Kris Sneddon (Can) Kona	

134 Anders Hovdenes (Nor) Team Etto Hoydahl
135 Hans Becking (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
136 Marc Colom (Fra)
137 Alexander Wetterhall (Swe)
138 Taavi Selder (Est)
139 Jiri Novak (Cze)
140 Andi Weinhold (Ger)
141 Cristian Cominelli (Ita) Gewiss Bianchi
142 Freddy Betremiaux (Fra) BH-SR. Suntour
143 Dmitry Medvedev (Rus)
144 Fabien Canal (Fra) Team Lapierre International
145 Sergio Pulido Rodriguez (Spa) Cemelorca-Seguros10.Com

Two laps down

146 Vivien Legastelois (Fra) Team Lapierre International
147 Nieck Busser (Ned)
148 Jo Norskar (Nor) Team Etto Hoydahl
149 Lee Williams (GBr)
150 Paul Van Der Ploeg (Aus)
151 Sebastien Carabin (Bel)
152 Rob Vangenechten (Bel)
153 Niels Wubben (Ned)
154 Martin Bratland (Nor) Team Etto Hoydahl
155 Heiko Gutmann (Ger)
156 Ruud Rentmeester (Ned)
157 Chun Hing Chan (HKg)
158 Andriy Khripta (Ukr)
159 David Lozano Riba (Spa) MSC Bikes
160 Patrick Gaudy (Bel)
161 Bilal Akgul (Tur)
162 Paul Remy (Fra)
163 Lukas Hanus (Svk)
164 Irjan Luttenberg (Ned)
165 Kevin Van Hoovels (Bel)
166 Tim Ottens (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
167 Martin Skopek (Svk)
168 Erik Nellen (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
169 Diego Rosa (Ita) Giant Italia Team
170 Tobias Ullmann (Ger) Team XLC Haibike
171 Axel Bult (Ned)
172 Alejandro Diaz De La Pena Lopez (Spa)
173 Laurent Mineur (Bel)
174 Christof Bischof (Swi)
175 Calle Friberg (Swe)
176 Jelmer Jubbega (Ned)
177 Bjorn Rondelez (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
178 Sebastian Szraucner (Ger)
179 Nicolas Jeantet (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D
180 Ludovic Mottet (Bel) Windose Houffalzie
181 Hubert Pollinger (Ita) Sunshine Racers Asv Nals
182 Tim Lemmers (Ned)
183 David Escolar Ballesteros (Spa) Sunshine Racers Asv Nals
184 Le Naour Sebastien (Fra) Breiz Mountain
185 Nicolas Vermeulen (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
186 Felix Euteneuer (Ger)
187 Guillaume Vinit (Fra) Scott Valloire Galibier
188 Roland Plank (Aut)
189 Bart Maas (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
190 Marco Minnaard (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
191 Andy Eyring (Ger)
192 Nick Daems (Bel)
193 Colin Cares (USA)
194 Wilko Rochow (Ger) Team Mayer Stevens
195 Andriy Gumenyuk (Ukr)
196 Nikolay Zagulyaev (Rus)
197 Pascal Hossay (Bel)
198 Jaco Wagenaar (Ned) Beone Chainreaction Mountainbiketeam
199 Josef Kamler (Cze) Ceska Sportelna MTB

200 David Fletcher (GBr)
201 Peter Coddens (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
202 Paul Gaillard (Fra)
203 Evgeniy Medvetsskyy (Ukr)

Three laps down

204 Markus Knott (Ger) Team XLC Haibike
205 Max Oste Macdonald (Swe)
206 Vladislavs Neroznaks (Lat)
207 Bart Van Hecke (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
208 Thomas Van Regenmortel (Ned)
209 Vero Lescher (Ger) Team Mayer Stevens
210 Florent Martin (Fra)
211 Olivier Chauvet (Fra)
212 Jiri Hudecek (Cze)
213 Steven Garcin (Fra)
214 Hugo Navarian (Fra) Team Cibf Keops
215 Benoît Thyreault (Fra) Team Cibf Keops
216 Alex Lupato (Ita) Giant Italia Team
217 Boris Vasilyev (Rus) Format-Udmurtia
218 Dennis Ebert (Ned)
219 Hans Urkens (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
220 Dries Govaerts (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team
221 Pierre Fuseau (Fra) Team Cibf Keops
222 Thomas Baisir (Bel) Windose Houffalzie
223 Michal Plesnik (Svk)
224 Julien Plagne (Fra) Team Cibf Keops
225 Kevin Soller (USA)
226 Clement Boes (Fra) Breiz Mountain
227 Yunus Yetkin (Tur) Goldcity Alanya
228 Ethan Gilmour (USA)
229 Alexey Belokrylov (Rus) Format-Udmurtia
230 Kamil Alev (Tur) Goldcity Alanya
231 Tomas Pesek (Cze)
232 Adrien Pastor (Fra) Team Cibf Keops