

MTB World Cup XC #9 & DH #7 - CDM

Schladming, Austria, September 11-14, 2008

Race 7 - September 14: Elite men cross country

Sauser caps season with a win

By Luke Webber in Schladming – cyclingnews.com

Christoph Sauser (Specialized Factory Racing) ended his most successful season to date with a win today in Schladming at the World Cup finals, beating a resurgent Jose Hermida (Multivan Merida) and earning second place in the overall standings to go with his rainbow jersey. Olympic champion Julien Absalon (Orbea) claimed the overall World Cup title.

In good conditions, on a rapidly drying course, the men raced over eight laps. The organisers were careful to make sure that the winner would be racing for about two hours.

The first climb was lead by Geoff Kabush (Maxxis), obviously eager to fight against Sauser for the second place overall in the World Cup series.

By lap two however, any hope of that battle was gone. A group containing Hermida, Sauser, Adam Craig (Giant) and Roel Paulissen (Cannondale-Vredestein) was at the front and making good ground.

At the start of lap two, Paulissen had an unfortunate fall from one of the bridges, catapulting over the bars and sustaining a concussion which resulted in an overnight stay in hospital.

This left Sauser and Hermida away to do battle along with Ivan Alvarez Gutierrez (Giant Italia) and Craig, who was slightly off the pace of the group.

By this point Absalon had already abandoned the race. Some reports said that the Frenchman was already out partying the night before the race - obviously excited about winning the overall World Cup before a pedal was turned.

Speaking to Absalon after the race, he confirmed the rumours and said that today was only about enjoying the moment and ending the season on his own terms.

"It was just so fun here, I have won the overall already so there was no pressure. Today was just for fun and it was fun to ride just as much as I wanted, nothing more."



Meanwhile on the slopes of Schladming the race was between rivals on the racetrack and friends on the circuit Hermida and Sauser. Both were very evenly matched but Hermida was on the attack from lap one, while the Swiss rider preferred to follow and use his ammunition in the closing stages.

One effort was enough to gain a slender ten second gap on the final lap and Sauser ended his season perfectly, with a win.

Burly Stander (GT Bicycles)
Photo ©: Luke Weber

"I really wanted to win today and it feels so good to end the season on top," said Sauser.

"I race for winning and for nothing else. I knew it was going to come down to us two, I knew it would be a mental thing also. I made the gap in the downhill, just a few seconds and then I just sprinted all the way to the finish.

"It was really only second by second today. I think it was a good battle today for the spectators and on a great course too, steep up and down, just what I like," said Sauser.



Sauser crosses the line
Photo ©: Luke Weber

For Hermida, it was more about salvaging something from a lacklustre year in which he has suffered bad luck with mechanicals and illness. Only in Madrid did he show a glimpse of his talent translated into a top result, but this has only served as motivation for him for the coming 2009 season.

"Only in the last month have I started to come back to my normal self - but maybe that is a good thing!" said Hermida. "Battles like today take years off your life! But I am still having fun on the bike and this is the most important thing."

"Today I had nothing to lose and that's why I took the responsibility of leading. I had to play all of my cards, I like to race it - is part of my character. I'm a hot latino - I don't care if I suffer!"

For the regular podium visitors there has been one major new player this season - a young South African rider who has made an impact at every race culminating in the under 23 title and fifth in the senior overall ranks. This year Burry Stander (GT Bicycles) has created inspiration for the new generation of riders, and next year it will be exciting to see the progression in his third year of international competition against the old guard of Sauser, Absalon and Hermida.

Results

1	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Factory Racing	1.57.56
2	Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0.19
3	Ivan Alvarez Gutierrez (Spa) Giant Italia Team	1.09
4	Lukas Fluckiger (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	2.20
5	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze)	2.51
6	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	3.10
7	Florian Vogel (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	3.23
8	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	3.32
9	Matthias Fluckiger (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	3.44
10	Burry Stander (RSA) GT Bicycles	3.53
11	Todd Wells (USA) GT Bicycles	4.09
12	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis	4.14
13	Martin Gujan (Swi) Athleticum-MTB-Team	4.21
14	Liam Killeen (GBr) Specialized Factory Racing	4.35
15	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	5.15
16	Milan Spesny (Cze) Merida Biking Team	5.26
17	Nino Schurter (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	5.33
18	Jochen Kass (Ger) Team ALB Gold	5.35
19	Stephane Tempier (Fra) Gewiss Bianchi	5.49
20	Emil Lindgren (Swe) Full-Dynamix-It	5.58
21	Andrea Tiberi (Ita) Giant Italia Team	6.17
22	Jakob Fuglsang (Den) Cannondale-Vredestein	6.52
23	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	7.02
24	Lars Petter Nordhaug (Nor)	7.27
25	Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra) Orbea	7.33
26	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze)	7.40
27	Hannes Metzler (Aut) Giant Mountain Bike Team	7.50
28	Alban Lakata (Aut) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team	7.52
29	Andreas Kugler (Swi) Fischer-BMC	7.55
30	Alexandre Moos (Swi)	8.00
31	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	8.27
32	Thomas Frischknecht (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	8.50
33	Yader Zoli (Ita) Giant Italia Team	8.53
34	Jorg Graf (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team	8.54
35	Martino Fruet (Ita)	8.57
36	Robert Gehbauer (Aut) Multivan Merida Biking Team	9.03
37	Kristian Hynek (Cze)	9.15
38	Periklis Ilias (Gre)	9.44
39	Silvio Bundi (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team	9.50
40	Fabian Giger (Swi)	10.24
41	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr) Giant Mountain Bike Team	10.55
42	Fabien Canal (Fra) Team Lapierre International	11.19
43	Josef Kamler (Cze) Ceska Sportelna MTB	11.23
44	Guillaume Vinit (Fra) Scott Valloire Galibier	11.30
45	Pierre Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Team Lapierre International	11.34

46 Matous Ulman (Cze)	11.37
47 Lukas Kaufmann (Swi)	11.41
48 Rene Tann (Ger)	11.52
49 Cedric Ravanel (Fra) Team Lapierre International	12.07
50 Martin Fanger (Swi)	12.13
51 Filip Eberl (Cze)	12.24
52 Connor Mcconvey (Irl)	12.32
53 Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Central Ghost Pro Team	12.47
54 Torsten Marx (Ger) Team ALB Gold	12.58
55 Frank Beemer (Ned)	13.23
56 Umberto Corti (Ita)	13.52
57 Andras Parti (Hun)	14.41

One lap behind

58 Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Beone Mountainbiketeam
59 Gerald Hauer (Aut)
60 Uwe Hochenwarter (Aut)
61 Alexis Vuillermoz (Fra) Scott Valloire Galibier

Two laps behind

62 Sebastien Carabin (Bel)
63 Maxim Gogolev (Rus)
64 Anders Ljungberg (Swe)
65 Thomas Litscher (Swi)
66 Calle Friberg (Swe)
67 Heiko Gutmann (Ger)
68 David Fletcher (GBr)
69 Frank Schotman (Ned)
70 Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita)
71 Barry Wicks (USA) Kona
72 Michael Stieglbauer (Ger)
73 Rob Vangenechten (Bel)
74 Diego Rosa (Ita) Giant Italia Team
75 Evgeniy Pechenin (Rus) Format-Udmurtia
76 Anton Gogolev (Rus)

Three laps behind

77 Pascal Hossay (Bel)
78 Till Marx (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team
79 Igor Bogdan (Ukr)
80 Samuele Porro (Ita)
81 Oleksandr Kachanov (Ukr)
82 Hubert Pollinger (Ita) Sunshine Racers ASV Nals
83 Ola Kjren (Nor)
84 Volodymyr Zinovkyn (Ukr)
85 Martin Loo (Est) Merida Biking Team

Four laps behind

86 Michael Margesin (Ita) Sunshine Racers ASV Nals
87 Jelmer Jubbega (Ned)
88 Michal Plesnik (Svk)
89 Jernej Muzga (Slo)
90 Felix Euteneuer (Ger)
91 David Escolar Ballesteros (Spa) Sunshine Racers ASV Nals
92 Guido Thaler (Aut)

Five laps behind

93 Andriy Gumenyuk (Ukr)
94 Lukas Platzgummer (Ita) Sunshine Racers ASV Nals
95 Boris Vasilyev (Rus) Format-Udmurtia
96 Ross Creber (GBr)
97 Christoph Plank (Aut)

98 Michael (1978) Weiss (Aut)
99 Nejc Cernilogar (Slo)

Six laps behind

100 Matthias Rupp (Aut) Matthias Rupp (Swi) Swisspower MTB Team
101 Tim Wijnants (Bel) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike Racing Team
102 Alexey Belokrylov (Rus) Format-Udmurtia
103 Claudio Caluori (Swi)
104 Andriy Khripta (Ukr)
105 Bostjan Lavtar (Slo)

Seven laps behind

106 Ronald Paur (Aut)