

Under 23 racer Stander wins elite men's Champéry World Cup

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With second place, Absalon locks up World Cup overall with one race to go

Burrry Stander (Specialized Factory Racing) has had what he considers to be the best week of his career, after following up his Under 23 cross country world championship title last weekend with his first World Cup win. Taking what was also the first South African cross country World Cup win, Stander beat series leader Julien Absalon (Orbea) in a thrilling come from behind victory at round seven in Champéry, Switzerland.

Absalon's second place locked up the overall title for the French rider with one race remaining, while Stander did the same for the Under 23 title. Ralph Näf (Multivan Merida) took third. Adam Craig (Giant) was the top North American, finishing sixth, with Sam Schultz (Subaru-Gary Fisher) 16th and Canadian champion Geoff Kabush (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain) fading to 21st after riding in the front group for the first few laps.

Alexis Vuillermoz (Lapierre International) led the field of 144 out of the start loop for the first of six laps. He continued to ride at the front on lap two, but Absalon was reeling him in, and took the lead on lap three, attacking on the main climb. As Absalon extended his lead to over one minute by the fourth lap, it appeared that the race was unfolding as expected.

However, on lap five, the first indication that this might be a historic day occurred when Stander began to slowly pull back the Olympic champion, knocking 20 seconds off the lead. An interesting and unprecedented situation was happening: Absalon was fading while Stander was getting stronger.

Going into the final, long climb before the technical descent to the finish, Absalon still had a lead of 25 seconds, but while he was struggling, Stander was powering up the climb, and he caught his rival at the top shortly before entering the singletrack. Stander swept by Absalon, who could only watch him go, and the recently crowned Under 23 world champion rolled into the finishing straight 15 seconds ahead of Absalon, punching the air in victory. Absalon rolled across the line and collapsed at the side of the track, utterly shattered after his ride, and only holding off Näf by nine seconds. The Flückiger brothers - Lukas and Mathias - both for Trek World Racing, completed the podium at 28 and 41 seconds respectively.

Standerr and Absalon had taken two different approaches to their long trip back to Europe from Canberra. Stander went home to South Africa for two days (same time zone as Europe) and then flew up to Switzerland. Absalon, by contrast, stayed in Sydney for two days, then went to Singapore for two days before flying to Europe. Absalon's wife said her husband was "exhausted" before the race began.

"For sure, this is a huge victory for me, my first World Cup win. I had a good week, resting up from Australia, so I think I came into the race well prepared. The start was pretty fast, so I lost a few spots, but I was able to move up on the first lap, and by lap two, I was in a good spot. For the last two laps, I was hearing that I was getting closer to Julien, so it gave me lots of motivation, especially when I could see him on the climb. When I caught up to him, I could see that he had nothing left, so I just went."

Craig moved up from the low 20s in the first lap to top-ten by mid-race, and then to sixth in the final lap, after posting some of the fastest lap times for the second half of the race. "I had, for me, a pretty good start, not dropping back too far. Then I was able to start moving up, because I think I maybe had more in the tank than some of those guys that dug so deep last week [at the Worlds]. For me, this is a sweet, sweet course, with the good climb, some nice singletrack, that was still rideable even after the rain last night."

Results

1	Burry Stander* (RSA) Specialized Factory Racing	1:41:06
2	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	0:00:15
3	Ralph Naef (Swi) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:00:24
4	Lukas Flückiger (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:00:28
5	Mathias Flückiger* (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:00:41
6	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team GMT	0:01:06
7	Alexis Vuillermoz* (Fra) Lapierre International	0:01:26
8	Marco Aurelio Fontana (Ita) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:02:06
9	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	0:02:26
10	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Factory Racing	0:02:49
11	Emil Lindgren (Swe) De Brink-Ten Tusscher	0:02:58
12	Cédric Ravanel (Fra) Lapierre International	0:03:09
13	José Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	
14	Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH-Suntour	0:03:25
15	Stéphane Tempier (Fra) TX Active Bianchi	0:03:54
16	Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	0:03:58
17	Marek Galinski (Pol) JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	0:04:10
18	Roel Paulissen (Bel) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:04:26
19	Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spa) Msc Bikes	0:04:38
20	Marek Konwa* (Pol)	0:04:46
21	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	0:05:06
22	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Multivan Merida Biking Team	
23	Jiri Friedl (Cze) Merida Biking Team	0:05:25
24	Guillaume Vinit* (Fra) Team Scott Valloire Galibier	0:05:40
25	Todd Wells (USA) Specialized Factory Racing	0:06:20
26	Nino Schurter (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:06:41
27	Christoph Soukup (Aut) Merida Biking Team	0:06:44
28	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	0:07:01
29	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:07:30
30	Sergio Mantecon Gutierrez (Spa) Cemelorca-Trek-Lorca Taller Del Tiempo	0:07:36
31	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	
32	Fabien Canal* (Fra) Lapierre International	0:07:51
33	Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra) Massi	0:07:56
34	Derek Zandstra (Can)	0:08:02
35	Milan Spesny (Cze) Ceska Sportelna MTB	0:08:11
36	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze) Giant Mountain Bike Team GMT	0:08:25
37	Robert Mennen (Ger)	0:08:37
38	Markus Bauer* (Ger)	0:08:43
39	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr) Giant Mountain Bike Team GMT	0:08:49
40	Sepp Freiburghaus* (Swi)	0:08:54
41	Christof Bischof (Swi) ISD Cycling Team	0:08:59
42	François Bailly Maitre (Fra) Team Scott Valloire Galibier	0:09:13
43	Karl Markt (Aut) Srm Stevens Team	0:09:41
44	Andrew Watson (Can)	0:10:03
45	Fabian Giger* (Swi) SKS M.I.G. Team	0:10:09
46	Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Tea	0:10:16
47	Yader Zoli (Ita) Torpado-4Us	0:10:44
48	Dario Alejandro Gasco* (Arg) Massi	0:10:54
49	Sebastien Carabin* (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team	0:10:57
50	Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita)	0:11:11

51	Patrik Gallati* (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:11:20
52	Jochen Kass (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:11:42
53	Anders Hovdenes* (Nor) Team Etto Hoydahl	0:11:53
54	Henk Jaap Moorlag* (Ned) De Brink-Ten Tusscher	
55	Marti Gispert Labarta (Spa) Msc Bikes	0:11:54
56	Pascal Meyer* (Swi) SKS M.I.G. Team	0:11:59
57	Severin Disch* (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team GMT	0:12:04
58	Felix Euteneuer* (Ger)	0:12:23
59	Nicolas Jeantet* (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	0:12:30
60	Michael Broderick (USA)	0:12:56
61	Bjorn Brems (Bel) Team Saeco	0:12:58
62	Silvio Bundi (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team GMT	0:13:02
63	Nicolas Vermeulen (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team	0:13:18
64	Robert Gehbauer* (Aut) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:13:20
65	Pierre Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Lapierre International	0:13:22
66	Diego Rosa* (Ita) Giant Italia Team	0:13:42
67	Marcel Wildhaber (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:13:58
68	Andrea Tiberi (Ita) TX Active Bianchi	0:14:40
69	Marc Colom (Fra)	0:15:46
-1lap	Piotr Brzozka* (Pol) JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	
-1lap	Sergiy Rusenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
-1lap	Ludovic Mottet (Bel)	
-1lap	Alexis Chenevier* (Fra) Team Scott Valloire Galibier	
-1lap	Ondrej Cink* (Cze) Merida Biking Team	
-1lap	Fabian Strecker* (Ger)	
-1lap	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Central Ghost Pro Team	
-1lap	Kornel Osicki* (Pol) JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	
-1lap	Patrick Gaudy (Bel)	
-1lap	Ludovic Dubau (Fra)	
-1lap	David Fletcher* (GBr)	
-1lap	Olof Jonsson* (Swe)	
-1lap	Connor McConvey* (Irl) De Brink-Ten Tusscher	
-1lap	Daniel Eymann* (Swi)	
-1lap	Andras Parti (Hun) Srm Stevens Team	
-1lap	Peter Glassford (Can)	
-1lap	Pascal Hossay* (Bel)	
-1lap	Umberto Corti (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	
-1lap	Josef Kamler* (Cze) Ceska Sportelna MTB	
-2laps	Eric Batty (Can)	
-2laps	Torsten Marx (Ger) Ds-Rennsport	
-2laps	Andrew Blair (Aus)	
-2laps	Manfred Reis* (Ger) Team Marin Bikes	
-2laps	Zsolt Juhasz* (Hun)	
-2laps	Cristobal Silva Ibaceta (Chi)	
-2laps	Matous Ulman (Cze) Scott & Hagget MTB Team	
-2laps	Matej Nepustil* (Cze) Ceska Sportelna MTB	
-2laps	Lachlan Norris* (Aus) Discovertasmania.Com	
-2laps	Lee Williams (GBr)	
-2laps	Simon Stiebjahn* (Ger)	
-2laps	Julien Saussac* (Fra) BH-Suntour	
-2laps	Luka Mezgec* (Slo) Mbk Orbea	
-2laps	Thomas Litscher* (Swi) SKS M.I.G. Team	
-2laps	Thibaut Bellanger* (Fra)	
-2laps	Nicolas Bouchet Bert Manoz* (Fra)	
-2laps	Marco Minnaard* (Ned) De Brink-Ten Tusscher	

-2laps	Renay Groustra (RSA)	
-2laps	Daniel Mcconnell (Aus) Torq Performance Nutrition	
-2laps	Benjamin Sonntag (Ger)	
-2laps	Henrique Avancini* (Bra) ISD Cycling Team	
-2laps	Alexis Swetloff (Fra) Keops	
-2laps	Patxi Cia Apezteguia (Spa) Conor - Camping La Siesta	
-2laps	Leni Trudel* (Can)	
-2laps	Amaury Gernez Aurenge* (Fra) Keops	
-2laps	Rob Vangenechten* (Bel) Team Saeco	
-2laps	Daniel Kaufmann* (Swi)	
-3laps	Rene Tann (Ger)	
-3laps	Frank Beemer* (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Tea	
-3laps	Tim Wynants* (Bel) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Tea	
-3laps	Jiri Hudecek (Cze) Scott & Hagget MTB Team	
-3laps	Alexander Gehbauer* (Aut)	
-3laps	Dries * Govaerts (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team	
-3laps	Benjamin Buchi* (Swi)	
-3laps	Cameron Jette* (Can)	
-3laps	Matthys Beukes* (RSA)	
-3laps	Tim Lemmers* (Ned) De Brink-Ten Tusscher	
-3laps	Oleksandr Gerashenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
-3laps	John Whittington* (GBr)	
-3laps	Simon Weber* (Swi)	
-3laps	Zsolt Szlobodnyik (Hun)	
-3laps	Valentin Fiderer* (Ger)	
-3laps	Jonas De Backer* (Bel)	
-4laps	Periklis Ilias (Gre) ISD Cycling Team	
-4laps	Kristian Hynek (Cze) Scott & Hagget MTB Team	
DNF	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze)	
DNF	Florian Vogel (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	
DNF	Florian Thie* (Swi)	
DNF	Markus Loisl* (Aut)	
DNF	Martin Gujan (Swi) Cannondale Factory Racing	
DNF	Lukas Kaufmann* (Swi)	
DNF	Alexandre Moos (Swi)	
DNF	Oleksandr Kachanov* (Ukr)	
DNF	Anders Ljungberg (Swe)	
DNF	Roman Rametsteiner (Aut)	
DNF	Robert Kircher (Aut)	
DNS	Evgeniy Pechenin (Rus) Format-Udmurtia	
DNS	Igor Bogdan (Ukr)	

Teams			
1	Specialized Factory Racing	67	pts
2	Multivan Merida Biking Team	61	
3	Orbea	60	
4	Trek World Racing	58	
5	Lapierre International	43	
6	Cannondale Factory Racing	36	
7	Giant Mountain Bike Team	26	
8	De Brink-Ten Tusscher	20	
9	BH-Suntour	17	
10	TX Active Bianchi	16	
11	Subaru-Gary Fisher	15	
12	JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	14	
13	MSC Bikes	12	
14	Merida Biking Team	12	
15	Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	10	
16	Team Scott Valloire Galibier	7	
17	Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	5	
18	Cemelorca-Trek-Lorca Taller Del Tiempo	1	