

MTB World Cup XC, DH & 4X #1 - CDM

Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, April 10-12, 2009

April 11: Elite men cross country

Hermida back on top

By Rob Jones in Pietermaritzburg – cyclingnews.com

Spain's José Hermida (Multivan Merida Biking Team) took the season opener and his fourth World Cup victory from a determined but "unable" Julian Absalon, while local favourite Burry Stander (Specialized Factory Racing) was third.

Hermida was the obvious strongman in the 32.9 km, seven-lap race, and came out of the blocks with an explosive 16-minute first lap. The pace never really eased, and while Canada's Geoff Kabush (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain) led on the first climb, he paid for the effort later, fading to finish 30th.

"I took advantage of my start position [on the front row]," said Kabush "but I had to back off in the heat. It's obviously not as well as I had hoped to do, but at least it will mean that I still have a reasonable start position for the European races."



A happy Jose Hermida
Photo ©: Rob Jones

A big pileup shortly after the start took down a number of riders including Canada's Raphael Gagne (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain) and Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (Subaru-Gary Fisher), whose race was over with a trashed rear wheel.

By the second lap an elite group had formed at the front: Hermida, Absalon, Stander, world champion Christoph Sauser (Specialized), Olympic silver medalist Jean-Christophe Peraud (Massi), Olympic bronze medalist Nino Schurter (Scott-Swisspower), Martin Gujan (Cannondale) and Florian Vogel (Scott-Swisspower).

Riders began dropping off under the relentless pace, which was exacerbated by Absalon's attack on the first climb of lap four. When the dust settled there were three left at the front - Absalon, Hermida and Stander, with Sauser and Schurter at 20 seconds, followed by Peraud, who was fading. Moving up steadily was Wolfram Kurschat (Topeak Ergon), who had won on the circuit a week earlier.



South Africa's Burry Stander
Photo ©: Rob Jones

A lap later, and Hermida decided to test his lead companions, and quickly opened a 10-second gap on Absalon, with Stander struggling to stay in touch with the French rider. Hermida continued to put time into Absalon through the rest of the race, eventually finishing 32 seconds ahead.

"I could feel my legs were very good, after last week's race on this course," said Hermida. "I think I made a very good plan with my training to prepare for this race, and came here more rested than some of the other riders. For me this is a fantastic result, it is only my fourth World Cup victory in 12 years! I will try now to keep the jersey through the next races."

Standar yo-yo'd behind Absalon, spurred on by the cheers of his compatriots. He pulled to within six seconds at one point, but would always fade back on the climbs. Nevertheless, he finished a strong third, and won the Under 23 category. Sauser hung on for fourth, just ahead of Kurschat.

Absalon, although he lost the leader's jersey, said "I am still really happy with this result, because my goal here was a top five result. Hermida was just faster today, and when he attacked mid race I could not stay with him. And then with Burry [Standar] always behind, he was always pushing ... It was very hard."

Standar agreed that the crowd was a huge spur for him. "It was incredible, it motivated me so much, with that awesome crowd driving me to catch back each time. It was a three-way battle, and Hermida was attacking so hard. I came back a few times, but then I cracked a bit on the fifth and just couldn't close the gap."

Results

1	Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	1.55.03
2	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	0.32
3	Burrry Stander* (RSA) Specialized Factory Racing	0.52
4	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Factory Racing	1.17
5	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	1.20
6	Nino Schurter (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	2.01
7	Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra) Massi	3.40
8	Lukas Fluckiger (Swi) Trek World Racing	3.56
9	Roel Paulissen (Bel) Cannondale Factory Racing	4.19
10	Mathias Fluckiger* (Swi) Trek World Racing	4.30
11	Stéphane Tempier (Fra) TX Active Bianchi	4.35
12	Florian Vogel (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	4.43
13	Martin Gujan (Swi) Cannondale Factory Racing	4.49
14	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze)	5.07
15	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	5.14
16	Christoph Soukup (Aut) Merida Biking Team	5.24
17	Ivan Alvarez Gutierrez (Spa) Giant Italia Team	5.45
18	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Multivan Merida Biking Team	5.51
19	Jochen Kass (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	5.54
20	Liam Killeen (GBr) Trek World Racing	5.58
21	Alexis Vuillermoz* (Fra) Lapierre International	6.15
22	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr) Giant Mountain Bike Team	6.24
23	Todd Wells (USA) Specialized Factory Racing	6.30
24	Hector Leonardo Paez Leon (Col) TX Active Bianchi	6.42
25	Cédric Ravanel (Fra) Lapierre International	6.58
26	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	7.15
27	Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spa) MSC Bikes	7.22
28	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	7.45
29	Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	8.22
30	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	8.56
31	Jorg Graf (Swi) Felt International MTB Team	9.57
32	Andrea Tiberi (Ita) TX Active Bianchi	10.17
33	Pierre Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Lapierre International	10.28
34	Marc Colom (Fra)	10.47
35	Sergiy Rusenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	10.51
36	Connor McConvey* (Irl) Felt International MTB Team	10.55
37	Jiri Friedl (Cze) Merida Biking Team	11.06
38	Robert Mennen (Ger)	11.07
39	Dries Govaerts* (Bel) Lingier-Versluys Team	11.11
40	Emil Lindgren (Swe) Felt International MTB Team	11.13
41	Daniel Mcconnell (Aus) Torq Performance Nutrition	11.26
42	Cristian Cominelli* (Ita) TX Active Bianchi	11.31
43	Yader Zoli (Ita) Torpado-4US	11.46
44	Lukas Kaufmann* (Swi)	11.48
45	Umberto Corti (Ita) Team CBE Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	12.01
46	Ludovic Dubau (Fra)	12.05
47	Silvio Bundi (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team	12.27
48	Guillaume Vinit* (Fra) Team Scott Valloire Galibier	12.39
49	Adam Craig (USA) Giant Mountain Bike Team	12.45
50	Hannes Metzler (Aut)	12.59
51	Bjorn Brems (Bel) Team Saeco	13.09
52	Balz Weber (Swi) DS-Rennsport	13.37
53	Milan Spesny (Cze) Ceska Sportitelna MTB	13.48
54	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Central Ghost Pro Team	13.55
55	Juan Pedro Trujillo Hernandez (Spa) Cemelorca-Trek-Lorca Taller Del Tiempo	13.56
56	Roan Exelby (RSA)	
57	François Bailly Maitre (Fra) Team Scott Valloire Galibier	14.09
58	Lachlan Norris* (Aus) Discovertasmania.com	14.51
59	Andrew Blair (Aus)	14.57
60	Severin Disch* (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team	15.17
61	Dario Alejandro * Gasco (Arg) Massi	15.26
62	Frank Schotman (Ned)	16.17
63	Michael Broderick (USA)	16.28
64	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze) Giant Mountain Bike Team	16.49

Behind one lap

65 Fabien Canal* (Fra) Lapierre International
66 Andreas Kugler (Swi) Felt International MTB Team
67 Bas Peters (Ned)
68 Chris Jongewaard (Aus) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team
69 Johnny Kritzinger (RSA)
70 Barry Wicks (USA) Kona
71 Renay Groustra (RSA)
72 Thomas Dietsch (Fra) Team Bulls
73 Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH-Suntour
74 Heiko Gutmann* (Ger)
75 Periklis Ilias (Gre) ISD Cycling Team
76 Stefan Sahm (Ger) Team Bulls
77 Rene Tann (Ger)
78 Nathan Haas* (Aus) Discovertasmania.com
79 Alban Lakata (Aut) Topeak Ergon Racing Team
80 Kashi Leuchs (NZl) Felt International MTB Team
81 Matthys Beukes* (RSA)
82 Kris Sneddon (Can) Kona

Behind two laps

83 Karl Platt (Ger) Team Bulls
84 Frank Beemer* (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team
85 Charlton Durie* (Aus) Discovertasmania.com
86 Marc Bassingthwaighte (Nam)
87 Craig Paul (RSA)
88 Martin Fanger* (Swi) Giant Mountain Bike Team
89 Alexander Gehbauer* (Aut)
90 Josef Kamler* (Cze) Ceska Sporitelna MTB
91 Philip Buys* (RSA)
92 Matous Ulman (Cze) Scott & Hagget MTB Team
93 Joel Graf (Swi) Felt International MTB Team
94 Erik Kleinhans (RSA)
95 Thomas Nicke (Ger)
96 Brandon Stewart (RSA)
97 Ryan Sherlock (Irl)

Behind three laps

98 Max Knox* (RSA)
99 Vivien Legastelois* (Fra) BH-Suntour
100 Kristian Hynek (Cze) Scott & Hagget MTB Team
101 Robert Gehbauer* (Aut) Multivan Merida Biking Team

Behind four laps

102 Raphael Gagne* (Can) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles
103 Nathan Byukusenge (Rwa)
104 Hugo Caetane* (Mri)
105 Poloko Makara (Les)

Behind five laps

106 Orbert Chembe* (Zam)

Behind six laps

107 Trust Munangandu (Zam)

* indicates under 23 riders

Teams

1	Multivan Merida Biking Team	81 pts
2	Specialized Factory Racing	70
3	Trek World Racing	55
4	Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	45
5	Orbea	43
6	Cannondale Factory Racing	40
7	Topeak Ergon Racing Team	28
8	TX Active Bianchi	27
9	Massi	24
10	Lapierre International	16
11	Merida Biking Team	15
12	Giant Italia Team	14
13	Giant Mountain Bike Team	9
14	MSC Bikes	4
15	Subaru-Gary Fisher	2
16	Rocky Mountain - Maxxis	1