

Schneitter surprises with World Cup win

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Lechner, Koerber round out top three



Nathalie Schneitter (Colnago Arreghini Sudtiroil) gets her first World Cup victory (Image credit: Dave McElwaine/trailwatch.net)

This year's women's cross country World Cup continues to be one of the most hard-fought, as both the fourth winner and the fourth World Cup leader in four rounds were awarded titles on Sunday in Champéry, Switzerland. Nathalie Schneitter (Colnago Arreghini Sudtiroil) won the race before a home crowd, while her teammate Eva Lechner took over the leader's jersey from Catharine Pendrel (Luna).

For Schneitter it was possibly the biggest victory of her career, to win a World Cup on home soil. "It was a dream," she said. "I knew that if it stayed muddy in the forest, I could do well, and I was thinking that it would be possible to be on the podium, but I did not think of winning."

The 4.3-kilometre circuit may have been short, but it was more than tough enough. After a 3.2-kilometre start loop spread out the fields, the

riders faced two difficult sections at opposite ends of the circuit. First, they had a very steep climb and then an immediate descent with a drop-off that launched them into the air for at least three metres. A ride-around was provided, but it was significantly slower.

From there the riders traversed the valley to the second, and main climb. At the top they dropped back into the woods for a long, muddy, singletrack descent full of roots and mud before heading into the start-finish area. Few riders could make it through a lap without running at least part of the circuit. The women did five laps plus a start loop.

The mad sprint from the gun saw Schneitter and Lechner immediately open a gap on the rest of the field. Willow Koerber (Subaru-Trek) gave chase, but couldn't quite close the gap to the front pair. Behind Koerber, the U23 World Cup leader Julie Bresset (BH-Suntour), was chasing in fourth and behind her a group kept forming and splintering, containing World Champion Irina Kalentieva (Topeak-Ergon), Katerina Nash (Luna), Esther Süss, Sabine Spitz (Central Pro), Katrin Leumann, Elisabeth Osl (Central Pro), Georgia Gould (Luna) and Marie-Hélène Premont (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain).

Significantly missing from the mix was the current World Cup leader Catharine Pendrel (Luna). Pendrel was having a rough day, starting with a sub-optimal start, then a jammed chain and, finally, a leaking tire that eventually required a wheel change. She would finish 16th and drop to third in the World Cup standings.

"I had a bad start, just didn't go fast enough," said Pendrel. "I got up to 11th, but entering the climb my chain lodged between my frame and cranks, and I lost a lot of time and places pulling it out. Just before entering the last lap at the end of the descent I burped my rear tire [lost air] and had to do a wheel change.

"The interruptions and running were tough mentally, but these things happen, particularly in ugly course conditions," she said. "It was not the best day, not the worst. I think I have good legs and look forward to challenging for the podium next weekend."

At the front, the first four were set: Schneitter, Lechner, Koerber and Bresset. Behind, the battle for fifth place continued for the first half of the race before Nash eventually settled into the final podium spot and began to open a gap on the remainder of the chasers.

Koerber, who needed to finish in front of Lechner to regain the World Cup lead she took after round two and lost to Pendrel after the next round, chased the Italian champion all race, but couldn't quite close the gap, finishing a scant 16 seconds behind her.

"I was getting close a few times, but I couldn't quite catch her," said Koerber. "I think I was climbing well, but losing some time on the descents. This just makes me more motivated for next weekend [round five], because I would really like to go into the final race in the US wearing that leader's jersey."

The gap between the top three is still tight, with Lechner at 655 points, Koerber at 640 and Pendrel at 594. Bresset continues to hold the Under 23 jersey.

ELITE WOMEN

#	Rider Name (Country) Team	Result
1	Nathalie Schneitter (Swi) Colnago Arreghini Sudtirool	1:45:40
2	Eva Lechner (Ita) Colnago Arreghini Sudtirool	0:02:13
3	Willow Koerber (USA) Subaru-Trek	0:02:29
4	Julie Bresset* (Fra) BH-Suntour	0:03:24
5	Katerina Nash (Cze) Luna Pro Team	0:03:39
6	Esther Süss (Swi)	0:04:00
7	Sabine Spitz (Ger) Central Pro Team	0:05:10
8	Katrin Leumann (Swi)	0:05:18
9	Elisabeth Osl (Aut) Central Pro Team	0:05:35
10	Marielle Saner-Guinchard (Swi) Bikepark.Ch Scott	0:05:36
11	Georgia Gould (USA) Luna Pro Team	0:05:40
12	Mary McConneloug (USA)	0:05:47
13	Marie-Helene Premont (Can) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain	0:06:10
14	Irina Kalentieva (Rus) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	0:06:12
15	Maja Wloszczowska (Pol) Ccc Polkowice	0:07:01
16	Catharine Pendrel (Can) Luna Pro Team	0:07:49
17	Tanja Zakelj* (Slo) MBK Orbea	0:08:23
18	Cécile Ravanel (Fra) Lapierre International	0:09:10
19	Gunn-Rita Dahle Flesjaa (Nor) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:09:53
20	Lene Byberg (Nor) Specialized Factory Racing	
21	Sarah Koba (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	0:11:36
22	Katherine Compton (USA)	0:11:45
23	Emily Batty* (Can) Trek World Racing	0:11:57
24	Anna Szafraniec (Pol) JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	0:12:04
25	Vivienne Meyer* (Swi) Colnago Arreghini Sudtirool	0:12:47
26	Annie Last* (GBr)	0:13:13
27	Rosara Joseph (NZl)	0:13:14
28	Amanda Sin (Can)	0:13:29
29	Sabrina Enaux (Fra) Felt Oetztal X-Bionic Team	0:13:39
30	Anja Gradl (Ger) Central Pro Team	0:14:08
31	Aleksandra Dawidowicz (Pol) Ccc Polkowice	0:14:26

32	Janka Stevkova (Svk)	0:14:29
33	Tereza Hurikova (Cze) Trek-Lorca Taller Del Tiempo	0:14:31
34	Hanna Klein (Ger)	0:14:58
35	Laura Metzler (Fra) BH-Suntour	0:15:12
36	Fanny Bourdon* (Fra)	0:15:17
37	Barbara Benko* (Hun)	0:15:31
38	Magdalena Sadlecka (Pol) Ccc Polkowice	0:15:36
39	Judith Pollinger* (Ita)	0:16:06
40	Yolande Speedy (RSA)	0:16:15
41	Sandra Walter (Can)	0:17:02
42	Elisabeth Brandau (Ger)	0:17:13
43	Heather Irmiger (USA) Subaru-Trek	0:17:29
44	Fabienne Niederberger (Swi)	0:17:52
45	Anna Villar Argente (Spa)	0:18:23
46	Michelle Hediger* (Swi) Fischer-Bmc	0:19:06
-1LAP	Nina Homovec (Slo) MBK Orbea	
-1LAP	Anne Terpstra* (Ned) Stappenbelt Specialized MTB Team	
-1LAP	Chloe Forsman (USA)	
-1LAP	Elisabeth Sveum* (Nor) Hard Rocx Racing Team	
-1LAP	Paula Gorycka* (Pol) Ccc Polkowice	
-1LAP	Rie Katayama (Jpn)	
-1LAP	Laura Turpijn (Ned) Team Merida Combee	
-1LAP	Coralie Redelsperger (Fra)	
-1LAP	Nataliya Krompets (Ukr)	
-1LAP	Katarzyna Solus* (Pol)	
-1LAP	Maria Osl (Aut) Fischer-Bmc	
-2LAPS	Alla Boyko* (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
-2LAPS	Karin Groen (Ned)	
-2LAPS	Daniela Veronesi (SMr)	
-2LAPS	Alexandra Engen* (Swe)	
-2LAPS	Lily Matthews* (GBr)	
-2LAPS	Julie Krasniak* (Fra)	
-2LAPS	Caroline Mani (Fra) BH-Suntour	

-2LAPS	Samara Sheppard* (NZl)
-2LAPS	Sofia Pezzatti (Swi)
-2LAPS	Carina Ketonen (Fin) VZW Goeman Scott Cycling Team
-2LAPS	Silke Schmidt (Ger)
-2LAPS	Lorraine Truong* (Swi)
-2LAPS	Stephanie Wiedner (Aut)
-2LAPS	Evelyn Staffler (Ita)
-2LAPS	Catherine Vipond (Can)
-2LAPS	Anna Oberparleiter* (Ita) Hard Rock Frw A.S.D.
-2LAPS	Corina Gantenbein (Swi) Fischer-Bmc
-2LAPS	Adelheid Morath (Ger) Felt Oetzal X-Bionic Team
-2LAPS	Maaris Meier (Est)
-2LAPS	Chengyuan Ren (Chn)
-2LAPS	Mirre Stallen (Ned)
-2LAPS	Sufen Ma (Chn)
-2LAPS	Kristien Nelen (Bel) VZW Goeman Scott Cycling Team
-2LAPS	Nicole Hanselmann* (Swi)
-2LAPS	Nicoletta De Jager (Ned)
-2LAPS	Nadine Rieder* (Ger)
-2LAPS	Zhuanzhuan Ye* (Chn)
-2LAPS	Myriam Saugy (Swi)
-2LAPS	Ying Liu (Chn)
-2LAPS	Alexa Hüni (Ger)
-3LAPS	Ivonne Kraft (Ger)
-3LAPS	Katherine O'shea (Aus) Torq Performance Nutrition
-3LAPS	Rocio Gamonal Ferrera (Spa)
-3LAPS	Rozanne Slik* (Ned) Team Merida Combee
-3LAPS	Tanja Starkermann* (Swi) Fischer Junior MTB Team
-3LAPS	Noga Korem* (Isr)
-3LAPS	Mariske Strauss* (RSA)
-3LAPS	Lesley Ingram (GBr)
-3LAPS	Caitlin De Wet* (RSA)
-3LAPS	Chiara Pastore* (Ita)

-3LAPS	Jodie Willett (Aus)
-3LAPS	Roberta Monaldini (SMr)
DNF	Eszter Erdelyi (Hun)
DNF	Tatjana Dold (Ger)
DNF	Kathrin Stirnemann* (Swi)
DNF	Qinglan Shi (Chn)
DNF	Mikaela Kofman* (Can)
DNF	Virginie Pointet* (Swi) Bikepark.Ch Scott
DNF	Annika Smail (NZL)
DNF	Asa Maria Erlandsson (Swe)
DNF	Therese Rhodes* (Aus)
DNS	Marie-Claude Surprenant* (Can)
DNS	Marta Pastore* (Ita)

ELITE WOMEN TEAMS

#	Rider Name (Country) Team	Result
1	Colnago Arreghini Sudtirol	81 pts
2	Luna Pro Team	63
3	Central Pro Team	47
4	Subaru-Gary Fisher	32
5	BH-Suntour	30
6	Bikepark.ch Scott	21
7	Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain	18
8	Topeak Ergon Racing Team	17
9	CCC Polkowice	16
10	MBK Orbea	14
11	Lapierre International	13
12	Multivan Merida Biking Team	12
13	Specialized Factory Racing	11
14	Giant Swiss Team	10
15	Trek World Racing	8
16	JBG-2 Professional MTB Team	7
17	Felt Oetzal X-Bionic Team	2