

Absalon grabs another World Cup win

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World Champ Schurter in second in Offenburg



France's Julien Absalon (Orbea) won by 49 seconds over his Swiss rival. (Image credit: Tour of Japan)

Olympic champion Julien Absalon (Orbea) continued his unbeaten streak at Offenburg with a fourth consecutive victory in the seven-lap German World Cup event.

The French maestro, who uncharacteristically hadn't hitherto won a World Cup race this season, moved to the front of the race on the first lap with World Champion Nino Schurter (Scott-Swisspower), who had won the first round of the series.

The pair began to distance themselves from a chase group containing Jaroslav Kulhavy (Rubena-Birrell-Specialized), Christoph Sauser (Specialized) and Florian Vogel (Scott-Swisspower). Sauser was leading the chase, but the group was making no time on the front duo.

On the third lap, Absalon managed to gain a

small advantage on Schurter, and then steadily extended it through the remainder of the race, to roll across the finish line 49 seconds in front of the Swiss rider. Kulhavy attacked his break companions in the final lap to take third, followed by Sauser and then Vogel.

Absalon's third lap was the fastest of the race (15:24), and he gained almost all of his winning margin in the this one-lap blitz. However, it was the technical riding of the French champion that were most noticable; in the slippery, rooty Snake Pit descent, Absalon rode the shortest line, while Schurter, Sauser and others were all going wider (and slower). The only other top-20 riders to consistently take the same line as Absalon were Kabush and Marco Fontana (Cannondale).

"I like this course very much," said Absalon. "It has very technical sections, plus good climbing. And the spectators are also very good here. It was a very close race with Nino at the beginning, but I attacked on the third lap on the beginning of the longer climb, and he came back, and I attacked again to get a small gap. After that, I gained a little bit more and a little bit more each lap. It was a perfect race for me."

Matthias Flückiger had been a member of the chase group until late in the race, when he had to stop for a rear wheel change, while series leader Jose Antonio Hermida (Multivan Merida) joined the chase for the first few laps before fading. Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (Subaru-Gary Fisher) was the top American rider, in 40th place.

Geoff Kabush (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain) was the top North American, in 15th place.

"I definitely felt better in this race, and it is good to finish off this part of the season with a strong result," said Kabush. "With a front row start, I think I could have had a top-10 result, but I didn't have a good start, dropping back a few spots and then first few laps some jibbag battles in the singletrack, but after that I felt I could open up the throttle and settle into my own pace."

Absalon now leads Schurter by 44 points in the overall standings.

"I like this course very much," said Absalon. "It has very technical sections, plus good climbing. And the spectators are also very good here. It was a very close race with Nino at the beginning, but I finally managed to get a little gap on him on the longer climb and was then able to increase it a little more every lap."

Race Notes

- Absalon said that the next race "will be very different. I will be a father for the first time, because my son will be born before [Champéry], and maybe it will give me more motivation." Just what the rest of the field needs to hear - Absalon more motivated...

- Ralph Näf (Multivan Merida) did not start. A week earlier, just prior to a German national series race he became ill. He is recovering now, but not quickly enough to start in Offenburg.

- A number of riders who had done well in the first two races struggled in Offenburg -, Hermida and Manuel Fumic (Cannondale), Fontana were a few. Some complained of "dead legs" or no power, and few admitted that they may have overtrained.

- The cross country series now takes a very long break - until late July. Most riders say that they will take a break, get a good training block in and then race national series races (plus national championships) before returning to the World Cup for the final three rounds prior to the Worlds in Mont Sainte Anne, Quebec.

#	Rider Name (Country) Team	Result
1	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	1:53:36
2	Nino Schurter (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:00:49
3	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze) Rubena - Birell - Specialized Cycling Team	0:01:08
4	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Factory Racing	0:01:24
5	Florian Vogel (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:01:35
6	Mathias Flückiger* (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:02:20
7	José Antonio Hermida (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:02:25
8	Ruben Ruzafa (Spa) Orbea	0:03:27
9	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	0:03:38
10	Inaki Lejarreta (Spa) Orbea	0:03:46
11	Marco Aurelio Fontana (Ita) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:04:29
12	Roel Paulissen (Bel) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:04:32
13	Stéphane Tempier (Fra) TX Active Bianchi	
14	Moritz Milatz (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:04:47
15	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain	0:04:56
16	Christoph Soukup (Aut) Merida Biking Team	0:05:11
17	Alexis Vuillermoz* (Fra) Lapierre International	0:05:28
18	Jean-Christophe Peraud (Fra)	0:05:43
19	Lukas Flückiger (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:05:53
20	Thomas Litscher* (Swi) M.I.G. Team	0:05:59
21	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi)	0:06:18
22	Fabian Giger (Swi) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	0:06:19
23	Jochen Kass (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:06:23
24	Sven Nys (Bel)	0:06:29
25	Martin Gujan (Swi) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:06:35
26	Henk Jaap Moorlag* (Ned) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	0:06:42
27	Matous Ulman (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team	
28	Manuel Fumic (Ger) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:07:08
29	Bas Peters (Ned) Team Merida Combee	0:08:01
30	Umberto Corti (Ita) Team Cbe Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	0:08:08
31	Ivan Alvarez Gutierrez (Spa) Giant Italia Team	0:08:10
32	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze)	0:08:18

33	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:08:21
34	Filip Eberl (Cze)	0:08:22
35	Pierre-Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Team New Cycling	0:08:23
36	Johnny Cattaneo (Ita)	0:08:25
37	Lukas Kaufmann (Swi) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team	0:08:27
38	Martin Fanger* (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	
39	Karl Markt (Aut) Felt Oetztal X-Bionic Team	0:08:39
40	Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	0:08:52
41	Liam Killeen (GBr)	0:09:00
42	Sergji Rysenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	0:09:15
43	Patrik Gallati* (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:09:26
44	Robert Mennen (Ger)	0:09:29
45	Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita) Hard Rock Frw A.S.D.	0:09:34
46	Pascal Meyer* (Swi) M.I.G. Team	0:09:40
47	Cédric Ravanel (Fra) Lapierre International	0:09:48
48	Balz Weber (Swi)	0:10:03
49	Jelmer Jubbega* (Ned) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	0:10:13
50	Andrea Tiberi (Ita) Surfing Shop	0:10:19
51	Magnus Darvell (Swe)	0:10:20
52	Tony Longo (Ita)	
53	Bjorn Brems (Bel) G-Skin-Deforche MTB Racing Team	0:10:26
54	Rubens Valeriano (Bra)	0:10:34
55	Frank Schotman (Ned) Stappenbelt Specialized MTB Team	0:10:39
56	Christof Bischof (Swi)	0:10:55
57	Maxim Gogolev (Rus)	0:11:01
58	Cristian Cominelli* (Ita) TX Active Bianchi	0:11:07
59	David Joao Serralheier Rosa (Por)	0:11:11
60	Todd Wells (USA) Specialized Factory Racing	0:11:12
61	Anders Hovdenes (Nor) Team United Bakeries, Hoydahl MTB Racing	0:11:21
62	François Bailly Maitre (Fra) Scott Les Saisies	0:11:45
63	Alban Lakata (Aut) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	0:11:57
64	Andras Parti (Hun)	0:12:03
65	Lachlan Norris (Aus)	0:12:05

66	Derek Zandstra (Can)	0:12:14
67	Robert Gehbauer (Aut)	0:12:20
68	Hannes Metzler (Aut) Muskelkater Genesis Team	0:12:23
69	Niels Wubben* (Ned) Team Merida Combee	0:12:31
70	Marcus Schulte-Luenzum* (Ger) M.I.G. Team	
71	Kohei Yamamoto (Jpn)	0:12:43
72	Marcel Wildhaber (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing	0:12:53
73	Stefan Sahm (Ger) Team Bulls	0:13:14
74	Fabian Strecker* (Ger)	0:13:41
75	Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	0:13:51
76	Catriel Andres Soto (Arg) Infotre - Leecougan	0:14:01
77	Jiri Hudecek (Cze)	0:14:53
78	Samuele Porro* (Ita)	0:15:18
79	Irjan Luttenberg* (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team	0:16:07
80	Fabien Canal* (Fra) Keops Itwo	0:16:27
81	Sebastian Szraucner (Ger)	0:16:48
82	Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH-Suntour	0:16:53
83	Alexander Gehbauer* (Aut)	0:17:50
84	Jimmy Tielens (Bel) Team Saeco	-1lap
85	Marco Minnaard* (Ned) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	
86	Frank Beemer (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team	-2laps
87	Jérémy Huguenin* (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	
88	Martino Fruet (Ita)	
89	Rene Tann (Ger)	
90	Oleksandr Gerashchenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
91	Anton Gogolev (Rus)	
92	Erik Groen* (Ned) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	
93	Tim Wynants (Bel) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team	
94	Daniel Mcconnell (Aus) Torq Performance Nutrition	
95	Gerhard Kerschbaumer* (Ita)	
96	Matthias Stirnemann* (Swi)	
97	Ludovic Dubau (Fra) Team New Cycling	
98	Marc Colom (Fra)	

99	Michael Broderick (USA)
100	Marcel Fleschhut* (Ger)
101	Edivando De Souza Cruz (Bra)
102	Sherman Paiva* (Bra)
103	Cristobal Silva (Chi)
104	Olof Jonsson* (Swe)
105	Alexis Chenevier* (Fra) Scott Les Saisies
106	Adrian Brzozka (Pol) Jbg-2 Professional MTB Team
107	Shlomi Haimy* (Isr) Infotre - Leecougan
108	Thomas Lapeyrie* (Fra) Scott Les Saisies
109	Marzio Deho (Ita)
110	Sepp Freiburghaus (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team
111	Kornel Osicki* (Pol) Jbg-2 Professional MTB Team
112	Martin Loo* (Est) Infotre - Leecougan
113	Thibaut Bellanger* (Fra)
114	Nicolas Jeantet* (Ita) ISD Cycling Team
115	Ricardo Paulo Reis Marinho* (Por) TX Active Bianchi
116	Gilles Sarrazin* (Fra)
117	Marc Bassingthwaighe (Nam)
118	Yader Zoli (Ita) Surfing Shop
119	Silvio Bundi (Swi)
120	Benjamin Buchi* (Swi)
121	Andrew Blair (Aus) Torq Performance Nutrition
122	Manfred Reis* (Ger) Felt Oetzal X-Bionic Team
123	Torsten Marx (Ger)
124	Mattias Nilsson* (Swe)
125	Mattias Wengelin* (Swe) Team Firebike-Droessiger
126	Felix Euteneuer* (Ger)
127	Olaf Rochow (Ger)
128	Zsolt Juhasz* (Hun) Euro One-Cube MTB Team
129	Eddie Andres Rendon (Col)
130	Reto Indergand* (Swi) Frn Tg Zentralschweiz
131	Markus Bauer* (Ger)

132	Severin Disch* (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	
133	Periklis Ilias (Gre) ISD Cycling Team	
134	Christopher Maletz (Ger)	
135	Martin Gluth* (Ger)	
136	Dmytro Titarenko* (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
137	Daniel Geismayr* (Aut)	-3laps
138	Pierre Lebreton (Fra) BH-Suntour	
139	David Miguel Costa Rodrigues* (Por) Infotre - Leecougan	
140	Marco Schätzing (Ger) Team Firebike-Droessiger	
141	Jhon Jairo Botero (Col)	
142	Ricardo Pscheidt (Bra)	
143	Ondrej Cink* (Cze) Merida Biking Team	
144	Mykhaylo Batsutsa* (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
145	Freddy Betremieux* (Fra)	
146	Ivan Smirnov* (Rus)	
147	Lee Williams (GBr)	
148	Artem Orlov (Rus)	
149	Joris Massaer (Bel) G-Skin-Deforche MTB Racing Team	
150	Ruben Scheire* (Bel) Team Saeco	
151	Matej Nepustil* (Cze) Merida Biking Team	
152	Martin Haring (Svk)	
153	Tobias Ludvigsson* (Swe)	
154	Luca Braidot* (Ita)	
155	Stephen Ettinger* (USA)	
156	Mario Luis Mirando Costa* (Por)	
157	Sergey Nikolaev* (Rus)	
158	Titouan Perrin Ganier* (Fra)	
159	Evgeny Nikolaev (Rus)	
160	Mirco Widmer* (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	
161	Tim Lemmers* (Ned) Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	
162	Henrique Avancini* (Bra) ISD Cycling Team	
163	Tad Elliott* (USA)	
164	Ethan Gilmour* (USA)	

165	Daniel Eymann* (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team	
166	Tim Dunford (GBr) Torq Performance Nutrition	
167	Diego Rosa* (Ita) Giant Italia Team	
168	Anders Ljungberg (Swe) Team Firebike-Droessiger	
169	Valentin Fiderer* (Ger)	
170	Markus Preiss* (Aut)	
171	Marcus Nicolai* (Ger)	
172	Jakub Magnusek* (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team	
173	Hugo Drechou* (Fra)	
174	Oleksandr Kachanov* (Ukr)	
175	Manfred Zöger* (Aut)	
176	Marc Stutzmann* (Swi)	
177	Anthony O'boyle (GBr) Torq Performance Nutrition	
178	Giancarlo Sax* (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team	
179	Ivan Rybarik (Cze) Merida Biking Team	
180	Simon Stiebjahn* (Ger)	
181	Tim Bohme (Ger) Team Bulls	-4laps
182	Sebastian Batchelor* (GBr) Infotre - Leecougan	
183	Travis Livermon* (USA)	
184	Thomas Decugis* (Fra)	
185	Tristan Cowie* (USA)	
186	Michele Casagrande (Ita) Elettroveneta-Corrateg	
187	Marco Arnold* (Swi) Giant Swiss Team	
188	Ben Thomas* (GBr) Torq Performance Nutrition	
189	Dror Pekatch (Isr) Subaru-Gary Fisher	
190	Timofei Ivanov* (Rus)	
191	Amotz Nehoray* (Isr)	
192	Gabor Bogar (Hun) Euro One-Cube MTB Team	
193	Volodymyr Zinovkin* (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team	
194	Russell Finsterwald* (USA) Subaru-Gary Fisher	
195	Aurenge Amaruy Gernez* (Fra) Keops Itwo	
196	Mitch Hoke* (USA)	
197	Rob Vangenechten* (Bel) Team Saeco	

198	Matthias Rupp* (Swi) Scott-Swisspower MTB-Racing
199	Mark Csielka* (Hun) Euro One-Cube MTB Team
200	Matthias Waldhart* (Aut)
201	Andras Szatmary* (Hun) Euro One-Cube MTB Team
DNF	Burrry Stander (RSA) Specialized Factory Racing
DNF	Jorge Oliveira Ferreira* (Por)
DNF	Milan Spesny (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team
DNF	Marek Konwa* (Pol) Elettroveneta-Corrateg
DNF	Jiri Novak (Cze)
DNF	Carlos Coloma (Spa) Msc Bikes
DNF	Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Trek-Brentjens Mountainbike Racing Team
DNF	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr) Giant Factory Team
DNF	Kristian Hynek (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team
DNF	Jonas De Backer* (Bel) Team Saeco
DNF	Alexey Medvedev (Rus) Elettroveneta-Corrateg
DNF	Sergio Mantecon (Spa) Trek-Lorca Taller Del Tiempo
DNF	Pavel Boudny (Cze)
DNF	David Fletcher* (GBr)
DNF	Patrick Tresch (Swi)
DNF	Guillaume Vinit (Fra) BH-Suntour
DNF	Andy Eyring* (Ger)
DNF	Alexander Blomqvist* (Swe)
DNF	Francois Theron* (RSA)
DNF	Simon Seehofer* (Aut)
DNF	Wolfgang Krenn (Aut) Muskelkater Genesis Team
DNF	Philip Buys* (RSA)
DNF	Paul Van Der Ploeg* (Aus) Felt Oetztal X-Bionic Team
DNF	Fabio Hernando Castaneda (Col) Infotre - Leecougan
DNF	Gerald Burgsteiner (Aut)
DNS	Ralph Naef (Swi) Multivan Merida Biking Team
DNS	Robbie Squire* (USA)

Elite men's teams

#	Rider Name (Country) Team	Result
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1	Orbea	84	pts
2	Scott-Swisspower MTB Racing	63	
3	Multivan Merida Biking Team	49	
4	Cannondale Factory Racing	48	
5	Trek World Racing	38	
6	Rubena - Birell - Specialized Cycling Team	32	
7	Specialized Factory Racing	30	
8	Topeak Ergon Racing Team	22	
9	TX Active Bianchi	18	
10	Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain	16	
11	Merida Biking Team	15	
12	Lapierre International	14	
13	Rabobank-Giant Offroad Team	14	
14	M.I.G. Team	11	
15	S&H Superior MTB Team	4	
16	Team Merida Combee	2	
17	Team CBE Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	1	