

Kulhavy crushes the competition for solo win on home turf

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Schurter earns silver nine seconds ahead of Absalon



Czech World Cup winner Jaroslav Kulhavy (Specialized) greets the fans as he finishes (Image credit: Tour of Japan)

World Cup leader Jaroslav Kulhavy (Specialized) had stated before the sixth round of the series, held in his home country of the Czech Republic, that he considered winning this event more important than a victory at the world championships. He did not disappoint nearly 20,000 of his compatriots in Nove Mesto na Morave, with a dominant performance that also locked up the World Cup title, with one race still remaining in the series. Nino Schurter (Scott-Swisspower) secured second in the overall standings with his second place in Nove Mesto, while Julien Absalon (Orbea) took third.

The pressure was on Kulhavy to win the first cross country World Cup to be held in the Czech Republic in 14 years, with his face plastered on posters and billboards in the surrounding towns and countryside. On paper, it was almost a sure thing, since Kulhavy has been so dominant this year, and he admitted, the night before the race, that this was more important than the world championships for him.

One thing he was certainly not lacking was confidence. "When I heard and saw all the people cheering for me, I knew I would win for sure," he said.

He took no chances, attacking on the start loop and opening a gap of eight seconds on Nino Schurter by the start of the first lap, and then extending it steadily through the rest of the seven laps. Schurter, fighting an infection and having just finished a training camp at altitude, dropped back after he realized he could not match Kulhavy's pace.

"I wanted to get away early," said Kulhavy, "so that I could avoid any traffic and ride at my own pace. It was almost a perfect race for me, with only some little mistakes. It was incredible."

Absalon, another favourite, had a slow start to the race, commenting afterward, "That was the worst start I have ever had for a World Cup! I did not have the power to be able to follow, so I started losing places. It was not until maybe halfway through the race that I began to feel better and could move up again."

While Schurter and Absalon were fading, world champion Jose Hermida (Multivan Merida) took up the chase, closing to within 31 seconds by the end of lap two. However, that was as close as he would get to Kulhavy, and he was eventually picked up and dropped by Schurter and Absalon as they recovered and began moving back through the chasers.

By the end of lap five, the pair was back with Hermida, and then dropped him in lap six. Schurter had opened a small gap on Absalon as they began the sixth lap, but the Frenchman quickly closed it up again, and the pair started the seventh and final lap together, one minute and 15 seconds down on Kulhavy. Kulhavy was beginning to cruise on the last lap, confident of his victory, and enjoying the cheers of his compatriots.

He rolled into the finishing stadium to the roar of over 5,000 people in the stands, and lifted his bike over his head to stride across the finish line, with a wide grin cracking his normally serious demeanor.

Behind, Schurter had finally managed to drop Absalon in the last kilometres to claim second by nine seconds over Absalon. Hermida hung on for fourth, and a last lap surge by Sergio Mantecon Gutierrez (Wild Wolf-Trek) gave the Spaniard the final podium spot - his first ever World Cup podium finish.

Race Notes

- Kulhavy's fourth win (plus a second and a third) give him 1360 points to Schurter's 1070 and Absalon's 810 (Absalon skipped the two North American rounds). With a win worth 250 points, the Czech rider now has an unassailable lead in the standings. Schurter is also assured of second by the same margin, but Absalon is not as secure in third, going into next weekend's final in Val di Sole, Italy. Maxime Marotte (BH-Suntour-Peisey Vallandry) is 70 points in back of Absalon, Hermida is 82 points behind and Burry Stander (Specialized) is at 102 points back.

- Sam Schultz (Subaru-Trek) was the top North American finisher, in 15th, his best ever World Cup result. He was followed by teammate Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski in 22nd, and Canada's Geoff Kabush (Maxxis-Rocky Mountain) in 30th. Todd Wells (Specialized) remains the top North American in the overall standings, despite missing the race (to compete in and win Leadville), in 21st, followed by Kabush in 24th place.

#	Rider Name (Country) Team	Result
1	Jaroslav Kulhavy (Cze) Specialized Racing	1:41:52
2	Nino Schurter (Swi) Scott - Swisspower MTB - Racing	0:00:45
3	Julien Absalon (Fra) Orbea	0:00:54
4	José Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spa) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:01:23
5	Sergio Mantecon Gutierrez (Spa) Wildwolf - Trek Racing	0:01:51
6	Lukas Flückiger (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:02:11
7	Maxime Marotte (Fra) BH - Suntour - Peisey Vallandry	0:02:32
8	Christoph Sauser (Swi) Specialized Racing	0:02:46
9	Moritz Milatz (Ger) BMC Mountainbike Racing Team	0:02:54
10	Mathias Flückiger (Swi) Trek World Racing	0:03:03
11	Manuel Fumic (Ger) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:03:16
12	Florian Vogel (Swi) Scott - Swisspower MTB - Racing	0:03:23
13	Rudi Van Houts (Ned) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:03:25
14	Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spa) Wildwolf - Trek Racing	0:03:37
15	Samuel Schultz (USA) Subaru - Trek	0:03:43
16	Martin Gujan (Swi) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:04:35
17	Ruben Ruzafa Cueto (Spa) Orbea	0:04:47
18	Fabian Giger (Swi) Rabobank - Giant Off-Road Team	0:05:02
19	Burrry Stander (RSA) Specialized Racing	0:05:10
20	Karl Markt (Aut) Felt Oetztal X - Bionic Team	0:05:14
21	Stéphane Tempier (Fra) TX Active Bianchi	0:05:19
22	Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (USA) Subaru - Trek	0:05:27
23	Marco Aurelio Fontana (Ita) Cannondale Factory Racing	0:05:36
24	Kristian Hynek (Cze)	0:05:39
25	Kevin Van Hoovels (Bel) Versluys - Evenza Team	0:05:51
26	Henk Jaap Moorlag (Ned) Rabobank - Giant Off-Road Team	0:05:56
27	Wolfram Kurschat (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	0:06:20
28	Jiri Friedl (Cze) Rubena - Birell - Specialized Cycling Team	0:06:28
29	Jan Skarnitzl (Cze) Rubena - Birell - Specialized Cycling Team	0:06:34
30	Geoff Kabush (Can) Team Maxxis - Rocky Mountain	0:06:41
31	Inaki Lejarreta Errasti (Spa) Orbea	
32	Andrea Tiberi (Ita) Torpado Surfing Shop	0:06:52

33	Jukka Vastaranta (Fin) Milka Trek MTB Racing Team	0:06:59
34	Catriel Andres Soto (Arg) Team Protek	0:07:03
35	Christoph Soukup (Aut)	
36	Lukas Kaufmann (Swi)	0:07:18
37	Milan Spesny (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team	0:07:33
38	Liam Killeen (GBr) Giant Factory Off-Road Team	0:07:50
39	Jelmer Pietersma (Ned) Milka Trek MTB Racing Team	0:08:02
40	Cédric Ravanel (Fra) GT Skoda Chamonix	0:08:10
41	Adam Craig (USA) Rabobank - Giant Off-Road Team	0:08:25
42	Anton Sintsov (Rus)	0:08:34
43	Derek Zandstra (Can)	0:08:37
44	Kohei Yamamoto (Jpn) Team Bridgestone Anchor	0:08:42
45	Umberto Corti (Ita) Team CBE Tecnoimpianti A.S.D.	
46	Filip Eberl (Cze)	0:09:02
47	Matous Ulman (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team	0:09:22
48	Martino Fruet (Ita)	0:09:40
49	Ivan Alvarez Gutierrez (Spa) Giant Italia Team	0:09:53
50	Balz Weber (Swi) BMC Mountainbike Racing Team	0:10:00
51	Jochen Kass (Ger) Multivan Merida Biking Team	0:10:08
52	Hannes Metzler (Aut) Muskelkater Genesis Team	0:10:09
53	Robert Gehbauer (Aut)	0:10:41
54	Robert Mennen (Ger) Topeak Ergon Racing Team	0:10:58
55	Marek Galinski (Pol) JBG - 2 Professional MTB Team	0:11:01
56	Tony Longo (Ita) TX Active Bianchi	0:11:34
57	Emil Lindgren (Swe) Rabobank - Giant Off-Road Team	0:12:30
58	Uwe Hochenwarter (Aut) Muskelkater Genesis Team	0:13:09
-1lap	Ralph Naef (Swi) Multivan Merida Biking Team	
-1lap	Simon Scheiber (Aut) Felt Oetztal X - Bionic Team	
-1lap	Rene Tann (Ger)	
-1lap	Michal Lami (Svk)	
-1lap	Sid Taberlay (Aus)	
-1lap	Andras Parti (Hun) Euro One - Cube MTB Team	
-1lap	Spencer Paxson (USA) Kona	

-1lap	Michael Broderick (USA)
-1lap	Sepp Freiburghaus (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team
-1lap	Adam Morka (Can)
-1lap	Pascal Meyer (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team
-1lap	Giuseppe Lamastra (Ita) Elettroveneta - Corratec
-1lap	Robby De Bock (Bel)
-1lap	Niels Wubben (Ned) Rabobank - Giant Off-Road Team
-2laps	Nicola Rohrbach (Swi) Elettroveneta - Corratec
-2laps	Steffen Thum (Ger)
-2laps	Julien Taramarcas (Swi) BMC Mountainbike Racing Team
-2laps	Szilard Buruczki (Hun)
-2laps	Carl Jones (NZl)
-2laps	Kazuhiro Yamamoto (Jpn)
-2laps	Cameron Jette (Can)
-2laps	Matthias Waldhart (Aut)
-3laps	Ken Onodera (Jpn)
-3laps	Oleksandr Gerashchenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team
-3laps	Sang Hoon Na (Kor)
-3laps	Simon Gegenheimer (Ger)
-3laps	Eddie Andres Rendon (Col)
-3laps	Martin Fanger (Swi) Giant Swiss Sr - Suntour
-3laps	Martin Loo (Est) Infotre - Bi & Esse - Leecougan
-3laps	Seiya Hirano (Jpn) Team Bridgestone Anchor
-3laps	Pierre-Geoffroy Plantet (Fra) Lapierre International
-3laps	Chun Hing Chan (HKg)
-3laps	Kyosuke Takei (Jpn)
-3laps	Renay Groustra (RSA)
-3laps	Giancarlo Sax (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team
-3laps	Cristobal Silva Ibaceta (Chi)
-3laps	Ludovic Dubau (Fra) Team Newcycling
-3laps	Marco Schätzing (Ger) Team Firebike - Droessiger
-3laps	Luis Anderson Mejia Sanchez (Col) Asptt Definitive Gitane
-3laps	Gabor Bogar (Hun) Euro One - Cube MTB Team

-3laps	Lukas Sablik (Cze)
-3laps	Periklis Ilias (Gre) Team Protek
-4laps	Martin Haring (Svk)
-4laps	Oliver Munnik (RSA)
-4laps	Georgios Pattes-Toumanis (Gre) Team Protek
-4laps	Marc Colom (Fra) Team Newcycling
-4laps	Paul Remy (Fra)
-4laps	Severin Disch (Swi) Thoemus Racing Team
-5laps	John Whittington (GBr)
DNF	Thomas Litscher (Swi) Felt Oetzal X - Bionic Team
DNF	Patrik Gallati (Swi) BMC Mountainbike Racing Team
DNF	Oliver Beckingsale (GBr)
DNF	Irjan Luttenberg (Ned) Mpl Specialized MTB Team
DNF	Sven Nys (Bel)
DNF	Sergji Rysenko (Ukr) ISD Cycling Team
DNF	Michele Casagrande (Ita) Elettroveneta - Corratec
DNF	Daniel Mcconnell (Aus)
DNF	Jiri Novak (Cze) S&H Superior MTB Team
DNF	Michal Prokop (Cze)
DNS	Ola Kjören (Nor) Team Fokus - Danica
DNS	Daniel Federspiel (Aut)
DNS	Pierre Lebreton (Fra) BH - Suntour - Peisey Vallandry