

UCI World Mountain Bike Championships Championnats du Monde du l'UCI- MTB

Report/Rapport: Women/Femmes Cross country - 19.9.1999 - 10.00-12.00

Fullana Supreme

Marga Fullana (ESP) flew up and over the steep, grinding course to win the women's cross-country world title in an epic race, which lasted two hours, thirty one minutes.

Fullana, the winner of three World Cup rounds this season, held off late charges by **Alison Sydor** (CAN) and **Paola Pezzo** (ITA) to earn her second gold medal of the championships. She also won gold in the team relay squad earlier this week.

Following two days of rain, Fullana, who lives on the sunny island of Mallorca, woke up to see the sun shining brightly over the mountains of central Sweden and took the change in the weather as a good omen.

She attacked on the opening lap and rode to an unchallenged victory in the 35.9-km race, with a time of 2h31'59". *"I was afraid it was going to be wet and rainy, but when I woke up today and saw the sun, I knew it was my day,"* said Fullana, winner of both the road and mountain bike national titles this season in Spain.

Fullana, one of the best climbers on circuit, came to Are fresh. She raced in only four World Cup rounds all season, winning at Madrid and Plymouth early in the year. Her third World Cup win came just two weeks ago in Belgium.

Fullana opened up a small gap on Sydor in the first climb, but the World Cup champion caught Fullana on the first descent and it looked like a long battle may be developing. But with each succeeding climb, Fullana would gain time on Sydor and the rest of field, and lose little or nothing on the descents. *"I was careful on the first descent, but when I saw it wasn't going to be as wet and dangerous as I expected, I rode faster,"* said Fullana, waving the Spanish flag as she crossed the finish line. *"I knew that I was climbing better and I knew it was a long race."*



Marga Fullana

The race was about 30 to 45 minutes longer than the elite women are used to racing and the long distance took its toll in the later stages of the race. Several racers, including **Barbara Blatter** (SUI), fifth at 4'51" and **Chantal Daucourt**, seventh at 9'51", went over their limits early on and faded from contention. Fighting behind Fullana were longtime rivals Sydor and The Olympic champion, Pezzo. Both former world champions, the duo battled it out over the closing lap and a half.

Pezzo had a poor start and battled back from the top-15 to pull within 25 seconds of Sydor by the middle of the third lap. Pezzo passed Sydor on the first climb of the fourth lap, but suffered cramps and went down in a spill in the final descent. Sydor came on strong in the final lap to finish second at 1'47" back.

Pezzo came across the line at 3'09" back to take the bronze. Sydor said she slowed her pace in the second lap when she realized she wasn't making up time on Fullana. *"I was riding to win in the first lap and a half, and I realized I was going a bit too hard for such a long race. I checked my pace a little bit and got my heart-rate down, then I had a good last lap. You're tired and everyone feels pretty crappy on the last lap, but I was able to push my heart-rate up pretty high,"* said Sydor. *"In the worlds, you try everything you can to win, but at some point you have to accept that you're not making any advantage."*

Pezzo said she's already gearing up to defend her Olympic title in Sydney next year and said a shift in her training program is causing her to lose a little bit of her climbing prowess. *"I've been training different because the course in Sydney is very fast, so I think I'm not as good a climber as I used to be,"* Pezzo said. *"I had a bad start and had to chase the whole race. In the technical parts it was hard to pass. I just kept going and going and when I passed Alison, I suffered cramps and then I crashed."*

American Alison Dunlap had an excellent race, crossing the line fourth at 4'00" back to earn her career-best worlds result. She hung tough and nearly caught Pezzo on the final lap. *"I stayed within myself and didn't go over my limit. A lot of people go out too hard. Blatter paid for it. I rode a good, solid race. In the last lap, these girls were right in front of me. On the last climb, Pezzo was right there, but I ran out of time,"* said Dunlap. *"I decided to run most of the hard descents. I just committed to it and it worked out well."*

Defending world champion **Laurence Leboucher** had a solid race after a disappointing season to finish eighth at 10'47". It was a reasonable end to a season in which she has been troubled by a thyroid problem. She described it as *"The worst year of my life."*

Pre-race favorite **Gunn-Rita Dahle** came into the worlds tired and retired after a head-on collision with a tree.

Flash Quotes:

1st **Margarita Fullana-Riera** (ESP)

"I had a lot of fear that it would be muddy and rainy today, so when I awoke this morning and saw the sun I realised that it was my day... I attacked very hard on the climb because I wanted to go into the singletrack alone, not in a group of riders...(Margarita says she walked some of the technically difficult downhill section but rode most of it...) When Alison Sydor caught me on Lap One I was not afraid, because I knew I was climbing better than she was, and it was a long race.... On the first descent I went slowly, then realized that it was not so slippery and this was good for my confidence."

2nd **Alison Sydor** (CAN)

"I knew it would be a long race so I went out hard to try and win it... I payed for it on the second lap... She (Pezzo) came past pretty hard... I had a little crash in the last lap but I was good enough for second... I'm happy, it's been a long season, I've been going all year. To win would have been nice, but... I rode very hard in the first hour... I calculated how long the race would be... You never know what will happen, so I kept something in reserve... Two hours, two and a half hours: it doesn't matter to me, but this is the longest world cup or world championship"

3rd **Paola Pezzo** (ITA)

"I got a bad start, I just couldn't push hard enough from the beginning. It was almost impossible to pass riders until I came through to start the first full lap... When I passed Alison Sydor, I knew that it would be impossible to catch Margarita Fullana, she was too far ahead... At 4km to go, I got a cramp... I am very happy to get a medal because the final 4km were so tough, I had to push myself to the limit."



<i>bib</i>	<i>place</i>	<i>name / nom</i>	<i>nat</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>t+</i>	<i>UCI code</i>
16	1	FULLANA RIERA, Margarita	ESP	2:31:59	0	ESP19720409
3	2	SYDOR, Alison	CAN	2:33:46	1:47	CAN19660909
12	3	PEZZO, Paola	ITA	2:35:08	3:09	ITA19690108
5	4	DUNLAP, Alison	USA	2:35:59	4:00	USA19690727
7	5	BLATTER, Barbara	SUI	2:36:50	4:51	SUI19701222
4	6	STROPPARO, Annabella	ITA	2:40:42	8:43	ITA19680704
15	7	DAUCOURT, Chantal	SUI	2:41:50	9:51	SUI19660623
1	8	LEBOUCHER, Laurence	FRA	2:42:46	10:47	FRA19720222
22	9	TEMPORELLI, Sandra	FRA	2:43:50	11:51	FRA19690125
29	10	ROVIRA PLANAS, Silvia	ESP	2:46:05	14:06	ESP19671215
6	11	MATTHES, Ruthie	USA	2:46:06	14:07	USA19651111
11	12	ZU PUTLITZ, Hedda	GER	2:46:07	14:08	GER19650904
80	13	IAGOUPOVA, Irina	RUS	2:46:55	14:56	RUS19771110
10	14	REDDEN, Christina	CAN	2:47:23	15:24	CAN19660316
32	15	JONSSON, Annica	SWE	2:48:37	16:38	SWE19700516
9	16	EPIFANOVA, Alla	RUS	2:49:43	17:44	RUS19761202
40	17	VILLENEUVE, Sophie	FRA	2:49:54	17:55	FRA19691106
46	18	KAIN, Shari	USA	2:50:25	18:26	USA19641117
31	19	RUSCA, Maroussia	SUI	2:51:29	19:30	SUI19740613
26	20	TROMBLEY, Ann	USA	2:51:31	19:32	USA19631122
17	21	TOMLINSON, Lesley	CAN	2:52:22	20:23	CAN19591226
18	22	DORLAND, Corine	NED	2:52:48	20:49	NED19730630
14	23	FLORIT-JUAREZ, Jimena	ARG	2:53:24	21:25	ARG19720518
21	24	GEYSEN, Hanneke	AUS	2:53:40	21:41	AUS19770730
74	25	WEISS, Helga	GER	2:54:41	22:42	GER19720512
41	26	GREEN, Erica	RSA	2:55:00	23:01	RSA19700925
23	27	SPITZ, Sabine	GER	2:56:03	24:04	GER19711227
30	28	DE NEGRI, Nadia	ITA	2:56:48	24:49	ITA19720406
51	29	LINDBERG, Madeleine	SWE	2:56:56	24:57	SWE19720302
36	30	BERTOSSI, Camilla	ITA	2:56:58	24:59	ITA19650719
75	30	STACHURA, Anna	POL	2:56:58	24:59	POL19770701
8	32	ALEXANDER, Caroline	GBR	2:58:09	26:10	GBR19680303
50	33	HENZI, Petra	SUI	2:58:20	26:21	SUI19691014
91	34	MA YAN, Ping	CHN	2:59:18	27:19	CHN19770205

35	35	KOBAYASHI,Kanako	JPN	3:01:07	29:08	JPN19700524
24	36	BRUNGER, Tracy	GBR	3:01:32	29:33	GBR19700608
48	37	VINK,Elsbeth	NED	3:01:37	29:38	NED19730125
77	38	TOVAGLIERI,Giuliana	ITA	3:02:07	30:08	ITA19650914
54	39	NAMBU,Hiroko	JPN	3:02:24	30:25	JPN19681008
73	40	PUIGGROS,Miranda Janet	ESP	3:02:30	30:31	ESP19730927
66	41	BAYLIS,Anna	AUS	3:03:48	31:49	AUS19761216
38	42	JERABKOVA,Jana	CZE	3:04:08	32:09	CZE19730208
25	43	BRAINARD,Golden	USA	3:05:34	33:35	USA19680919
78	43	MUNOZ CARETTE,Cariza	MEX	3:05:34	33:35	MEX19701115
19	45	DORION,Melanie	CAN	3:07:34	35:35	CAN19761119
42	46	NAKAGOME,Yukari	JPN	3:07:49	35:50	JPN19651030
52	47	FRANKE,Dellys	AUS	3:07:55	35:56	AUS19761002
34	48	VAN WERSCH,Loes	NED	3:08:11	36:12	NED19670807
90	49	KAVERINA,Tatiana	RUS	3:08:54	36:55	RUS19631105
45	50	BRAUMANN,Birgit	AUT	3:09:06	37:07	AUT19730405
27	51	MC QUAID,Melanie	CAN	3:09:48	37:49	CAN19730517
28	52	SINCLAIR,Patricia	CAN	3:10:38	38:39	CAN19690202
57	53	ROBINSON,Louise	GBR	3:11:56	39:57	GBR19650112
83	54	BAUMGARTNER,Ulrike	AUT	3:12:55	40:56	AUT19740512
33	55	PARKER,Sadie	NZL	3:14:02	42:03	NZL19690329
72	56	KOTZE,Hannele	RSA	3:15:37	43:38	RSA19651227
85	57	BRUHN,Nadine	DEN	3:16:25	44:26	DEN19770410
82	58	AUGUSTIN,Audrey	USA	3:16:30	44:31	USA19661005
58	59	KACHALKA,Natalia	UKR	3:19:15	47:16	UKR19750409
39	60	VAN DEN BRAND,Daphny	NED	3:20:08	48:09	NED19780406
98	61	YU,Quan-Lan	CHN	3:20:45	48:46	CHN19780330
99	62	BUBLOVA,Ilona	CZE	0	0	CZE19770616
81	63	SIMONOVA,Iryna	UKR	0	0	UKR19800203
102	64	WANG,Wenxia	CHN	0	0	CHN19791008
71	65	VAJDA,Marta	HUN	0	0	HUN19740303
64	66	SOLLAART,Tessa	NED	0	0	NED19750429
92	67	WHEELER,Gail	RSA	0	0	RSA19740301
105	68	LEAL BALDERAS,Veronica	MEX	0	0	MEX19770115
63	69	OWENS,Tarja	IRL	0	0	IRL19770525
101	70	QIAN,Yunjuan	CHN	0	0	CHN19770311
100	71	KOIVULAHTI,Katja	FIN	0	0	FIN19700404
104	72	MIENY,Liani	RSA	0	0	RSA19700807
2	73	DAHLE,Gunn-Rita	NOR	0	0	NOR19730210
13	73	GRIGSON,Mary	AUS	0	0	AUS19710603
37	73	MARSHMAN,Rene	USA	0	0	USA19640928
76	73	BALDUZZI,Elisa	ITA	0	0	ITA19651217
79	73	OSTERGREN,Maria	SWE	0	0	SWE19780409
89	73	CROUS,Carla	RSA	0	0	RSA19740812