

# **MTB World Championships – CM**

## **Livigno, Italy, August 31-September 4, 2005**

**By Rob Jones in Livigno [www.cyclingnews.com](http://www.cyclingnews.com)**  
**September 4: Elite Men Cross Country**

### **Absalon triumphs as flats plague hard-fought men's race**

As the saying goes - "It was deja vu all over again!" Julien Absalon (France) and Gunn-Rita Dahle both repeated as world champions today in the elite cross-country races which close out the 2005 Mountain Bike World Championships in Livigno, Italy.

While Julien Absalon may have defended his title like Gunn-Rita Dahle, he had a much tougher battle. The three and a half lap race saw attacks and counterattacks, with both Absalon and silver medallist Christoph Sauser (Switzerland) suffering flats.

Marco Bui (Italy), racing in front of a partisan crowd, got off to one of his patented fast starts in the first half lap, stringing the field out. Absalon, Sauser, Fredrik Kessiakoff (Sweden) and Ralph Naf (Switzerland) led the chase, with Jose Hermida (Spain), Hector Paez (Colombia), Thomas Frischknecht (Switzerland) and Geoff Kabush (Canada) in the next chase group.

Bui blew after the first full lap, and Naf succumbed to a broken chain and a flat tire - one of a number, including Kabush, Adam Craig (USA) and a late surging Seamus McGrath, who managed to move up to as high as tenth before puncturing in the final lap.



Julien Absalon (France)  
Photo ©: Marek Lazarski

At the front, the lead group coalesced on the first full lap into Absalon, Sauser, Naf, Kessiakoff and Hermida. Hermida revealed that he made a tactical error during the race, which could have cost him one or two spots on the podium.

"It was really tough out there, a long and strategic race."

Strategic?

"The whole time there were attacks by the strongest - Susy (Sauser) and Julien. My mistake was to stay last in the group, so when they attacked in the single track I was blocked. I couldn't pass until the wider path, and they (Naf and Kessiakoff) wouldn't work. I had to do the work - I tried to motivate them: 'tomorrow is not a race, this is the day', but they wouldn't do anything. On the last lap I started to attack alone, and Kessiakoff was dropped (Naf had fallen back with a flat). I heard that Susy was in front with a flat, but I could not do it."



"I can be proud of my race I think - I pushed, I attacked, I played my cards. When you do that you can sleep at night."

Christoph Sauser (Switzerland)  
Photo ©: Marek Lazarski

While Hermida was chasing, both Sauser and Absalon were having problems. Both flattened and received new wheels in the technical zone, but Sauser felt that he made a tactical error which cost him the title.

"I cornered too hard, and lost some pressure in my wheel - not completely flat but slower, harder to ride. I should have taken (the time) to use a CO2 cartridge in the first zone, but I decided to tell the team, so that they could have it all prepared at the next zone. But this slowed me down a lot to get to the next zone and I lost concentration, and when I got there I saw Julien just pulling out and realized he had a mechanical problem also. I had a long time to replace my wheel because of the disc (brake) - I'm lucky Jose (Hermida) didn't catch me. If I had taken the cartridge (earlier) I think I would be world champion now."

Absalon's difficulties extended beyond his flat. "I had a rear flat on the second lap and I didn't realize it right away. After my wheel change I took a bath in the river after I fell off the bank! then I started to get cramps, so it took great concentration to continue to the end."

Absalon's winning margin was a slim 18 seconds, and Hermida was only a further 36 seconds behind Sauser, so the race could have easily turned out differently.

## Race Notes

- Absalon took a different program for the year to build up for the Worlds, skipping the World Cup races after #4. "I like to have a main goal each year to motivate me, last year it was the Olympics and this year the world championships. After Houffalize (World Cup) I had a break and then prepared for Livigno. I realized that it would be a fight, because my rivals, like Sauser, Hermida and Bui would be very strong, but at the same time I had to measure my strength to save energy to the end"

He also commented on the fact that he likes to race from the front. "I have a problem if I am not leading, it is true. I feel more confident if I am alone and in front, and the others have to chase me."

- Sauser and Absalon both spoke in the press conference about being the World Cup champion versus World Champion:

Sauser: "I would like to be world champion more than World Cup leader. The World Cup is cool because it is all year long, but for the World's everything has to come together for two hours. We (riders) probably spend six months thinking about this day. It is such a big step, second to first, to get the bloody jersey, but I have had such bad luck. But, like the World Cup, which took me a long time to win overall after seconds, thirds, so it will happen also with the world championship."



The medalists and their gongs  
Photo ©: Marek Lazarski

Absalon: "It is true that in the World Cup you need to be very regular all season and you have to adapt for all of the different tracks. It is very different for the world championships, you have to have everything come together for one day. I prefer this one day."

## Results

### Men - 43.00 km

1 Julien Absalon (France)	2.07.34 (20.22 km/h)
2 Christoph Sauser (Switzerland)	0.18
3 Jose Antonio Hermida Ramos (Spain)	0.54
4 Fredrik Kessiakoff (Sweden)	1.32
5 Thomas Frischknecht (Switzerland)	4.15
6 Manuel Fumic (Germany)	4.17
7 Hector Leonardo Paez Leon (Colombia)	4.29
8 Silvio Bundi (Switzerland)	4.47
9 Oliver Beckingsale (Great Britain)	5.08
10 Carlos Coloma Nicolas (Spain)	5.18
11 Marco Bui (Italy)	6.18
12 Lado Fumic (Germany)	6.19
13 Kashi Leuchs (New Zealand)	6.31
14 Geoff Kabush (Canada)	6.39
15 Balz Weber (Switzerland)	6.42
16 Liam Killeen (Great Britain)	7.00
17 Cedric Ravanel (France)	7.43
18 Roel Paulissen (Belgium)	7.46
19 Seamus Mcgrath (Canada)	8.11
20 Miguel Martinez (France)	8.23
21 Adam Craig (United States Of America)	8.46
22 Bart Brentjens (Netherlands)	9.02
23 Alejandro Diaz De La Pena Lo (Spain)	9.04
24 Peter Riis Andersen (Denmark)	9.09
25 Christoph Soukup (Austria)	9.13
26 Bas Peters (Netherlands)	9.41
27 Martin Gujan (Switzerland)	9.56
28 Mathieu Toulouse (Canada)	10.09
29 Moritz Milatz (Germany)	10.10
30 Martino Fruet (Italy)	10.33
31 Stefan Sahm (Germany)	10.53
32 Jeremy Horgan-Kobelski (United States Of America)	11.05
33 Karl Platt (Germany)	11.15
34 Thijs Al (Netherlands)	11.42
35 Ralph Naf (Switzerland)	

36 Maarten Tjallingii (Netherlands)	11.58
37 Michael Weiss (Austria)	12.41
38 Marek Galilski (Poland)	12.54
39 Ramon Bianchi (Italy)	12.57
40 Marc Trayter Alemany (Spain)	13.27
41 Florian Vogel (Switzerland)	14.02
42 Michael Broderick (United States Of America)	14.06
43 Jader Zoli (Italy)	14.08
44 Sid Taberlay (Australia)	14.37
45 Sergiy Rysenko (Ukraine)	15.28
46 Jelmer Pietersma (Netherlands)	15.38
47 Alban Lakata (Austria)	15.44
48 Carl Decker (United States Of America)	16.01
49 Ricky Federau (Canada)	16.15
50 Mirko Pirazzoli (Italy)	17.35
51 Karl Markt (Austria)	17.40
52 Klaus Nielsen (Denmark)	17.45
53 Roman Rametsteiner (Austria)	17.59
54 Todd Wells (United States Of America)	18.07
55 Miha Solar (Slovenia)	18.21
56 Johann Pallhuber (Italy)	18.27
57 Juan P. Trujillo Hernandez (Spain)	18.43
58 Edivando Cruz (Brazil)	19.21
59 Robin Seymour (Ireland)	20.14
60 Caspar Austa (Estonia)	20.31
61 Radim Korinek (Czech Republic)	20.52
62 Jerome Chevalier (France)	21.18
63 Martin Kraler (Austria)	21.54
64 Dario Acquaroli (Italy)	21.55
65 Maxim Gogolev (Russian Federation)	22.11
66 Hiroki Irokawa (Japan)	22.52
67 Carlos Franco Gennero (Argentina)	24.19
68 Mannie Heymans (Namibia)	24.50
69 Hannes Genze (Germany)	24.56
70 Szilard Buruczki (Hungary)	26.45
71 Julian Andres Rodas Ramirez (Colombia)	27.16
72 Ovidiu Tudor Oprea (Romania)	28.11
73 Dylan Cooper (Australia)	28.41
74 Bilal Akgul (Turkey)	29.25
75 Michael Northcott (New Zealand)	29.49
76 Kris Sneddon (Canada)	30.10
77 Ricardo Ribeiro (Portugal)	31.38
78 Igor Bogdan (Ukraine)	31.40
79 Andras Parti (Hungary)	42.07

#### 1 lap behind

80 Raita Suzuki (Japan)
81 Boris Popovic (Serbia And Montenegro)
82 Brandon Stewart (South Africa)
83 Yunus Yetkin (Turkey)
84 Pavao Roset (Croatia)
85 Keiichi Tsujiura (Japan)
86 Ivica Mesaric (Croatia)
87 Zoran Zivkovic (Serbia And Montenegro)
DNF Jean Christophe Peraud (France)
DNF Jochen Kaess (Germany)
DNF Milan Spesny (Czech Republic)
DNF Marti Gispert Labarta (Spain)
DNF Roland Green (Canada)
DNF Wayne Hiscock (New Zealand)
DNF Brent Miller (Australia)
DNF Nelio Simao (Portugal)
DNF Hakon Austad (Norway)
DNF Hasan Kandemir (Turkey)