

# Forissier Fortuitous & Billouin Brilliance at Stop #2 of 2024 XTERRA World Cup

*The second stop of the 2024 XTERRA World Cup on April 27, 2024 saw Arthur Forissier (FRA) capitalizing while Solenne Billouin (FRA) remained undefeated.*

VOULIAGMENI, GREECE, April 29, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Drama and domination marked the second stop of the 2024 XTERRA World Cup on April 27, 2024 with Arthur Forissier (FRA) capitalizing while Solenne Billouin (FRA) remained undefeated.

As the host nation, Greece marked its 11th year of off-road triathlon competition under the XTERRA banner in Vouliagmeni. Renowned for its clear waters and the dramatic scenery of the Athenian Riviera, Vouliagmeni provided the backdrop for elite athletes competing for a €15,000 prize purse in this historic town.

The event featured over 50 professional athletes offering a maximum 100 series points alongside the prize purse. Updated 2024 XTERRA

World Cup Standings can be found here where 2nd place Felix Forissier (FRA), remains at the top with 190 points, closely followed by his older brother Arthur who is now only 8 points behind. 2023 XTERRA World Cup Champion, Arthur Serrières (FRA) debuted in his first race with a 3rd place result, but Jens Emil Sloth Nielson (DNK) maintains 3rd overall in the men's standings by coming in 4th overall on Saturday.

Solenne Billouin stays atop the women's field with back-to-back series wins and Aneta



Grabmüller (CZE) ties 2023 World Cup Champion, Alizée Paties (FRA) (who finished 4th on Saturday) creating a two-way tie for second overall with a 2nd place result win. Meanwhile, it was Sandra Mairhofer (ITA) who rounded out the top 3 in her first race of the series.

### Course Rundown

The Full Distance Race in Vouliagmeni, with a water temperature at 19°C and air temperatures ranging from 18°C to 22°C, began with a 1.5K, two-lap swim in the Aegean Sea. This was followed by a challenging 30-kilometer, two-lap mountain bike ride featuring loose pebbles, sharp rocks, and punchy climbs. The 9.2-kilometer run started with a technical scramble to the highest point, testing the athletes' endurance before a final 1-kilometer sprint through town.

### Men's Race Recap

All eyes were on double-champion Arthur Serrières as he aimed to kick off his World Cup campaign in Greece, having opted for extended winter training in Europe instead of competing in Taiwan. His main challenger on the course was the current series leader and formidable opponent, Felix Forissier. Also in contention was Jens Emil Sloth Nielsen, who entered the race second overall, closely followed by Felix's older brother, Arthur, who was just behind in the rankings.

### Powering Out of the Water



Jules Dumas (FRA) led the field out of the water with a time of 18:25, having aggressively pushed on the first lap to create a gap. However, his lead over the chase pack—consisting of Michele Bonacina (ITA) (who made a notable return after a wrist injury last month), Felix Forissier, Maxim Chané (FRA), Federico Spinazzè (ITA), and Arthur Serrières—remained slim at less than 10 seconds. Arthur Forissier, slightly behind, exited the water about 20 seconds after the main group but managed to make up crucial time with the day's second fastest transition, stating, "I felt good on the swim but even with this good feeling, I missed the first pack, so I was really just behind maybe 10-15 meters chasing the pack. I was not able to start fast enough, so I was chasing all alone, and that was really exhausting."

### Forissier Brothers Break Away

The mountain bike segment saw Jules Dumas quickly caught by powerhouses Felix Forissier, Michele Bonacina, Maxim Chané, Federico Spinazzè, and Arthur Serrières as they exited the town. Arthur Forissier, displaying a burst of speed, closed the gap by the first major climb, taking the lead and setting a fierce pace that only his younger brother Felix dared match. Arthur Forissier exuberated confidence throughout the segment by exclaiming, "At the beginning of the bike, I immediately felt that I had a crazy feeling, so I decided to push and was able to make a little gap. It was not an attack, just a very high pace."

This aggressive move by Arthur Forissier shattered the lead pack, leaving Serrières and Spinazzè to spearhead the chase, while Dumas and Bonacina struggled to keep up. Serrières noted, "On the bike, I missed just a little extra thing. I was controlling 10 to 15 seconds at the beginning, and after that, they opened the gap in the second loop, but I was expecting that."

Bonacina faced further misfortune with a puncture that pushed him out of the top five. The Forissier brothers leveraged their position to extend their lead, with Arthur notably dominating the second lap, raising questions about Felix's condition following his victory in XTERRA Taiwan, but he was quick to deny any skepticism by saying, "On the bike, [Arthur and I] talked a bit to strategize the best way to create the most gap we could against the others. It was a great bike segment, and I have no regrets."

As the race progressed, the two brothers entered the transition with a significant lead. Behind them, the competition intensified as two-time XTERRA World Champion Serrières was caught by a rapidly advancing Jens Emil Sloth Nielson and Theo Dupras (FRA), who, along with Spinazzè, had made significant gains to join the front runners as they prepared for the next segment.

### Dramatic Finish

As the run segment commenced, the Forissier brothers, Arthur and Felix, were initially neck and neck. Felix began to create a small lead during the climb of the most technical part of the course. He managed to extend this lead to about 10 seconds, a margin that remained stable as they

approached the final stages of the race.

Behind them, Arthur Serrières set a fast pace from the start, determined to close the gap between him and the leading brothers. Despite his efforts, Jens Emil Sloth Nielson couldn't match Serrières' speed and settled into fourth place. As the race progressed, Serrières slowly chipped away at the lead, setting the stage for a dramatic finish.

"I don't know what happened with Felix; he was just focused at the end and he just switched off for one second. I really don't know, I think maybe he was a little bit too focused," Arthur Forissier reflected on the final moments of the race.

The tension peaked in the last 1,000 meters on the beach, where Felix, leading the race, took a wrong turn. This critical error allowed his brother to surge ahead and claim victory. A dejected Felix managed to correct his course and secure second place. "At the finish line and the beach, I couldn't see my way and lost myself and the first place," Felix confessed, visibly upset by the mishap.

Arthur Serrières, pushing hard to the very end, finished third, having nearly closed the significant gap to the Forissier brothers. Despite not capturing the lead, Serrières remained upbeat about his performance. "I'm quite happy today, just missing some rhythm as I don't have many races under my belt this season. I don't feel any pressure; I'm so happy to just get back racing here, just enjoying being back," he shared.

### Strategic Outcomes

Arthur Forissier's victory at Vouliagmeni, although through unexpected circumstances, cements his standing as he targets this year's World Cup, moving up to second in the rankings. His focus now shifts to stop #3 at [Oak Mountain](#), which offers a critical opportunity to advance.

Felix Forissier retains a slender lead in the standings despite his navigational error, holding an 8-point advantage. The slight margin highlights the series' competitiveness and the importance of consistency across races. Arthur Serrières, still adjusting to the season's pace, leveraged his experience to crack the top ten. Jens Emil Sloth Nielsen, displaying strong early race form, finds himself in third place overall. His performance in Greece sets him up as a key contender moving forward.

The upcoming double header at Oak Mountain represents a pivotal moment in the series, where athletes like Serrières will aim to disrupt the Forissier brothers' momentum and redefine the leaderboard dynamics.

### Top 10 Men: Overall Results

Arthur Forissier, FRA: 2:19:54

Felix Forissier, FRA: 2:20:19

Arthur Serrières, FRA: 2:20:30

Jens Emil Sloth Nielsen, DNK: 2:21:21

Maxim Chané, FRA: 2:23:52

Federico Spinazzè, ITA: 2:24:21

Jules Dumas, FRA: 2:24:44

Theo Dupras, FRA: 2:25:39

Kieran McPherson, NZL: 2:26:44

Sébastien Carabin, BEL: 2:27:42

## Women's Race Recap

In the women's showdown, Sandra Mairhofer (ITA) drew significant attention as she entered her first race of the series, with many curious about how the former two-time XTERRA European Champion would fare against series leaders Billouin and Paties. However, it was Aneta Grabmüller (CZE) who stole the spotlight, building on her strong performance in Taiwan to establish herself as a rising star and a serious contender in the women's field.

## Grabbing The Lead

Aneta Grabmüller took charge in the swim segment, creating a substantial lead over the eventual top five finishers. She reflected on her performance, stating, "I went to the front from the very beginning and just set my pace. Today I didn't feel so great in the water, but after Taiwan, I changed my mindset from being defensive to being more in charge and knew that I can actually stay in front."

Emma Ducreux emerged next, swimming solo, with Solenne Billouin, Sandra Mairhofer, Anna Zehnder, Romy Spoelder, and Marta Menditto trailing. Billouin noted her push to remain with the chase pack by stating, "I decided to push a bit more in the swim because I knew that being in a group on the bike could really help me."

Meanwhile, Alizée Paties experienced an unusually challenging day, losing significant time to her World Cup competitors in the swim.

## MTB Magnificence From Billouin

Aneta Grabmüller initially replicated her Taiwan performance by leading deep into the bike segment. However, this time, only the two-time XTERRA World Champion, Solenne Billouin, managed to overtake her. Billouin's dominance was not evident, stating modestly, "I didn't think the course would suit me because usually, the other girls are a bit more powerful on the bike, especially when there is not too much elevation."

Billouin further explained her strategy and its effectiveness, noting, "I ended up being with

Sandra, which was smart because she's usually the fastest biker." Sandra Mairhofer, known for her mountain biking skills, moved up to third but couldn't close the widening gap to the leaders, trailing by nearly three minutes at the second transition.

Meanwhile, despite an off day, Alizée Paties showcased her technical biking skills, working her way into fourth place and positioning herself to salvage World Cup points. Grabmüller held strong behind Billouin as long as possible before Billouin's surge ahead solidified a 1 minute 40 second lead into the final stage. Mairhofer's efforts to catch up reflected her determination, but Billouin's training and technical confidence kept her in front, maintaining parity on the more challenging segments of the course.

## Final Fight

The trail run concluded with no shifts in the top positions: Alizée Paties secured 4th, Marta Menditto (ITA) finished 5th, and Helena Karásková Erbenová (CZE), a veteran and XTERRA hall of famer, showcased her endurance by securing 6th place. Sandra Mairhofer reflected on her performance positively, noting the challenge the track posed for her. "Yeah, it was my first race, so I'm happy with the result. I gave everything I had. I think the track did not suit me so well, [but] the running course was great because there was a huge mix of technical climbs, downhills, and also some flat parts where I could push hard. I'm really happy with my run."

Aneta Grabmüller expressed her surprise and satisfaction with securing second place. "Obviously, I'm really happy about second place. I did not expect it. I knew I could do better than in Taiwan performance-wise, but the field was way more stacked here, so I was hoping I could maybe finish top five," she shared. During the race, encouragement from her father helped her push past her limits, "once I started to climb for the second time, my dad actually gave me for the first time a split, and that I was gaining on Sandra which I couldn't believe."

Race winner Solenne Billouin shared her mixed emotions and the physical challenges she faced. "I felt less confident than in Taiwan, but actually, my body was fresher, so you know you have to take what you have with you on race day, and it went super well," she commented. Despite a slow start to the run, Billouin found her stride, "The first two kilometers I was a bit shaky, like I didn't have good energy. But I also know that coming off the bike, you always need a bit of time." Her victory brought a mix of relief and joy, "I'm super happy about the sensation, also the feeling of winning again. There's a lot of good to take and to work on for the next one, but for now, it's all so good to enjoy what I've just accomplished."

## Implications Moving Into Stop #3

Solenne Billouin continues to dominate the 2024 XTERRA World Cup with back-to-back wins in the first two stops of the season. The two-time World Champion not only claimed the top spot in both races but also recorded the fastest bike and run splits and solidified her lead. Aneta Grabmüller confirmed her status as a top contender with another strong second-place finish,

tying for second in the overall standings.

Sandra Mairhofer, in her season debut, secured a podium finish, holding off Alizée Paties and showcasing her balanced skill set across all three disciplines. This result places her well within the top competitors as the series progresses. Alizée Paties, despite a challenging day, managed to salvage important World Cup points, indicating her resilience and experience in maintaining contention under pressure.

As the athletes look ahead to Stop #3 at Oak Mountain, the stakes remain high with Billouin leading, but with strong challenges expected from Grabmüller, Paties and a highly competitive women's field.

### Top 10 Women: Overall Results

Solenne Billouin, FRA: 2:42:36

Aneta Grabmüller, CZE: 2:45:04

Sandra Mairhofer, ITA: 2:47:08

Alizée Paties, FRA: 2:49:06

Marta Menditto, ITA: 2:54:26

Helena Karásková Erbenová, CZE: 2:55:06

Anna Zehnder, CHE: 2:56:23

Carina Wasle, AUT: 2:58:34

Elizabeth Orchard, NZL: 3:00:15

Emma Ducreux, FRA: 3:03:36

[Complete Results Here.](#)

[Updated 2024 XTERRA World Cup Standings Here.](#)

Tune in for Stop #3

Tension continues to escalate after the second stop of the 2024 XTERRA World Cup, yet the leaders maintain their hold on the golden jersey as the series approaches the third stop at Oak Mountain. This upcoming event represents a significant opportunity for reshuffling the standings, being the first of the season's double-feature stops. Here, athletes have the chance to compete in both a Full Distance and a Short Track race over the same weekend, potentially earning a combined 175 points. This unique format is particularly advantageous for those who excel in back-to-back events, offering a pivotal moment for contenders to ascend the leaderboard as the series moves to the USA. Catch the action on May 19 at [xterraplanet.com/watch-live](https://xterraplanet.com/watch-live)

XTERRA Content Team

XTERRA

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

Facebook  
Twitter  
LinkedIn  
Instagram  
YouTube  
TikTok

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/707331812>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.