

Middaugh, Billouin Capture Final Short Track Victories of the 2024 XTERRA World Cup

MOLVENO, TRENINO, ITALY,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- On September 26, the 2024 XTERRA World Championship four-day festivities aired live with the Short Track Race as Sullivan Middaugh (USA) and Solenne Billouin (FRA) secured their wins in a made-for-TV competition at the penultimate showdown of the 2024 XTERRA World Cup.

Set against the backdrop of the Dolomites in Northeast Italy, the invitation-only race consisted of the top XTERRA Elites on a spectator-friendly course weaving through Molveno's vibrant race village. The conclusion of four XTERRA Short Track events in this year's World Cup was a high-intensity contest lasting under 40 minutes. 75 points were awarded to the winners in both the men's and women's races, contributing to their overall World Cup standings to capture their share of the €100,000 series prize purse.

Middaugh won the men's race in 32 minutes and 52 seconds, earning his first Short Track victory in epic fashion, by less than a second. Billouin clinched the women's race in 36 minutes and 48 seconds, marking her fourth win in the condensed format, securing a 2024 clean Short Track sweep, and grabbing the necessary points to clinch the overall 2024 XTERRA World Cup title as they head into the final race of the seven-stop series at the XTERRA World Championship on Saturday, September 28,



Sullivan Middaugh (USA)



Solenne Billouin (FRA)

2024.

Race Recap

A 400-meter swim in Lake Molveno transitioned into a frenetic 8K mountain bike course through the race village with steep bridges and sudden gradient changes, concluding with a 3K run, turning the final segment into an all-out sprint to the finish line.

[Watch Replay](#)

Elite Women

In the women's race, Two-time Olympian Rachel Klamer (NED) was first out of the water with a swim time of 6:16, closely followed by Aneta Grabmüller (CZE) at 6:19. Solenne Billouin (FRA), who would eventually take the win, exited the water in 7:02, trailing the leader by 46 seconds.

During the bike segment, Billouin made a significant move by recording the fastest bike split of 17:38, overtaking the early leaders and establishing a strong lead. Grabmüller completed the bike in 18:23, while Alizée Paties (FRA) clocked 18:33.

On the run, Loanne Duvoisin (SUI) posted the fastest run split of 10:36, attempting to close the gap and eventually overtaking Paties. However, Billouin's lead was enough to secure the victory with a total time of 36:48. Grabmüller held on to second place, finishing in 37:04, while Duvoisin's strong run brought her to third place with a time of 37:41.

Top 5 Women's Results

1. Solenne Billouin (FRA): 36:48
2. Aneta Grabmüller (CZE): 37:04
3. Loanne Duvoisin (CHE): 37:41
4. Alizée Paties (FRA): 37:44
5. Anna Zehnder (CHE): 37:57

Quotes from Top 3 Women

1. Solenne Billouin (FRA): "My plan was to push hard to open up my legs and build confidence for Saturday. I was gaining 10 to 15 seconds on each bike loop, so I knew I could take the lead and catch up. I'm a better runner than Aneta, but I still went hard. With my cyclocross experience, which is about 40–50 minutes of racing, I had the speed, so it was under control."

2. Aneta Grabmüller (CZE): "It was a really good start. After 20 meters, I asked myself, 'Where is everyone?' Then I got on Rachel Klamer's feet, and it was really helpful to save some energy. This

seems to be a year of second places, but I'll totally take that. I didn't know what to expect today. This is a boost of confidence."

3. Loanne Duvoisin (CHE): "The water was so cold—it was a bit of a shock—but I always had the idea to keep the energy for Saturday. I'm quite surprised to finish third, so that's okay. I just tried to stay on my tempo and not to over-push."

Elite Men

In one of the most intense and closely contested finishes in XTERRA Short Track history, the men's race culminated in a thrilling sprint to the finish line, with the top three athletes separated by mere fractions of a second.

The race ignited with Jens Roth (DEU) leading out of the water, clocking the fastest swim split of 5:46, followed by Keller Norland (USA) at 5:48. Close behind were Felix Forissier (FRA) at 5:50, Maxim Chané (FRA) at 5:52, and Arthur Serrières at 5:57. Sullivan Middaugh (USA) exited the swim in 6:15, trailing the leaders but poised for a comeback.

On the bike leg, Jens Emil Sloth Nielsen (DNK) posted the fastest split of 15:57, surging past multiple competitors, but the condensed format of this race, along with exiting the water in 15th place, proved too much ground to make up. Middaugh made a significant move with a bike time of 16:13, closing the gap on the frontrunners. Serrières and Forissier recorded bike splits of 16:43 and 16:50, respectively, keeping them well within striking distance.

As the athletes transitioned to the run, the stage was set for an epic showdown. Serrières unleashed a blistering run, recording the fastest split of 8:58. Both Middaugh and Forissier ran strong with identical times of 9:05. The trio converged in the final stretch, setting off an incredible sprint to the finish with deafening cheers of excitement.

In the last 100 meters, Middaugh, Forissier, and Serrières battled neck and neck. With sheer determination and the roar of the fans behind him, Sullivan Middaugh edged ahead to claim victory with less than a second apart from Forissier and Serrières who seemed to cross the line virtually simultaneously. Middaugh was awarded the win by the slimmest of margins. Forissier claimed the points he needed to stay atop the 2024 World Cup rankings headed into the final race on Saturday, while Serrières's third place result didn't seem to bother the reigning back-to-back XTERRA World Champion seeking his third title in a row in just 2 days time.

Top 5 Men's Results

1. Sullivan Middaugh (USA): 32:52
2. Felix Forissier (FRA): 32:52
3. Arthur Serrières (FRA): 32:52
4. Maxim Chané (FRA): 33:07

5. Jens Emil Sloth Nielsen (DNK): 33:16

[Complete Results](#)

Quotes from Top 3 Men

1. Sullivan Middaugh (USA): "I'm a little bit shocked. Felix set a hard pace on the first lap of the run, and I told myself to stay with him and see what happens. My legs came around after that, and I tucked in behind him until the last 200 meters when I let it go. I didn't have a great swim, but worked my way back on the bike. This gave me confidence going into Saturday's World Championship."

2. Felix Forissier (FRA): "A crazy finish, but I think it was a good race. I told myself not to push too hard and save my strength for the World Championship on Saturday. I made a good start in the swim, and during the bike I was just a bit of a spectator, observing who was around me. On the run, I felt great, and at the finish, I saw Sullivan—a pretty strong guy—but it was awesome to compete with him."

3. Arthur Serrières (FRA): "It was part of an activation for Saturday's race. During the run, I increased the pace and opened up a gap. It was quite okay because there was no one else behind me, so I just tried to push. I'm quite okay with that sprint finish. Quite happy to share the podium with these strong guys."

Replay the Action

Fans around the world tuned in live to catch all the action of Thursday's Short Track Race, available now on replay at XTERRA's YouTube channel where they can also set their notifications to watch Saturday's 2024 XTERRA World Championship livestream.

It was another fast-paced race, filling screens with thrilling challenges like wooden berms and jumps, that kept viewers on the edge of their seats as the world's best off-road triathletes vied for critical World Cup points. With the 2024 XTERRA World Championship just days away, the Short Track race set the stage for an intense finale. For ongoing updates and behind-the-scenes content, fans are also invited to follow along on XTERRA's Instagram page.

About XTERRA

XTERRA is a global lifestyle brand that champions the outdoor enthusiast in their pursuit of relentless adventure. From pioneering the sport of cross-triathlon in 1996, XTERRA has grown to become a leading brand in off-road adventure through the XTERRA World Tour, XTERRA Trail Run World Series and the XTERRA World Cup, connecting an eco-aware community of worldwide explorers that seek to protect the places where they play. For more information, visit

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