



Engadin Bike Giro vom 10. bis 12. Juli 2020 //
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Engadin Bike Giro
3rd stage 64,3 Kilometer / 2.318 vertical meters
Start & Finsih: Silvaplana/Sportzentrum Mulets

Photos and results: <https://engadin-bike-giro.ch/live-2020/>

Kite Beach finale: Keller and Vitzthum secure overall ranking of the Engadin Bike Giro 2020
While the Swiss Alessandra Keller (Thömus) also won the third stage of the three-stage race, Daniel Geismayr (Centurion-Vaude) from Vorarlberg celebrated his first stage victory

Under the steel blue Engadin sky, Rheinecker (canton St. Gallen) Simon Vitzthum (jb Brunex felt) finished second today, 1:58 min behind the Austrian day's winner Daniel Geismayr (winning time 2:56:36 h), to make the overall victory at the fifth edition of the Engadin Bike Giro perfect. At the start of the third stage of 64.4 km and 1,992 meters of altitude difference, Vitzthum had just one second lead over his worst rival, the Wyniger (Canton Bern) Lukas Flückiger from Team Infinity, while Geismayr was already half an hour behind in the overall standings after technical problems on the second stage. Therefore, the ten-strong leading group did not counter the attack of Austrian State Champion Geismayr up the Sulvretta Pass and let him go. And so it came to the expected showdown between Vitzthum and Flückiger, which the former finally won by a clear margin of 37 seconds. Flückiger paid great respect to the performance of the 25-year-old: "I'm giving Simon the overall victory. He was very strong and consistently delivered very good performances. He's in good form. This is world class!" Flückiger, who would have liked to win the overall classification himself, had stomach problems in the last part of the long climb and had to let Vitzthum go. In the meantime, Vitzthum's lead had even increased to three minutes, but while Flückiger did his best to catch up with Vitzthum again in the final single trails, he played it safe: "I knew I had to stay calm. One second advantage is nothing, a flat tyre costs a lot more time. But I also knew: Flückiger, Julian Schelb and Thomas Litscher are faster than me in the downhill. That's why I had to take a lead before the race." Two weeks before the Swiss Olympic Cross-Country Championships in Gränichen (Aargau), Vitzthum is in great shape.

Daniel Geismayr (Centurion-Vaude) "absolutely wanted to show what I can do and what I can do today." The man from Vorarlberg succeeded perfectly: "I was able to ride my rhythm in the long climb." He quickly got a small lead, felt himself "like in a tunnel" and climbed up to the Sulvretta Pass: "It was definitely an advantage to ride up the narrow hairpin bends alone. There it was relatively steep and slippery. If one person makes a mistake, all must dismount." But Geismayr didn't have to take any risks either there or in the downhill section and was able to win the stage after 2:56:36 hours, almost forty minutes faster than the winning time in the organizer's marching chart. Thomas Litscher (KMC Orbea) and Flückiger fought for 3rd place in the daily classification in the sprint on the banks of Lake Silvaplana. Wafer-thin and only after the evaluation of the finish film, the commissioners of Swiss Cycling declared Flückiger third place, Litscher had to settle for 4th place, but had no great ambitions for the overall ranking: "I have set good charms for the next two weekends", when a race of the national cross-country racing series Swiss Bike Cup in Leukerbad and the Swiss Championships are on the agenda in Switzerland. "My legs were the worst on the first day, yesterday they



were better, and today they are even better. I'm tiptop satisfied, everything is fine", the 31-year-old was satisfied with fourth place in the overall standings (+5:15 min). In between, 3rd place in the overall ranking was taken by Julian Schelb from the Stop&Go Marten Defence team from Münstertal. Although he had no podium finishes in the individual stages (1st stage sixth, 2nd stage fourth, 3rd stage fifth), Schelb's consistently good performance meant that he was constantly moving up in the overall standings: "I can draw a very positive balance. I always made the most of it and rode very consistently." While many athletes were able to spend more time on training in Corona times, the trained carpenter and semi mountain bike professional took a different path: he even increased his working hours from 60 to 80 percent: "If there are no races on the weekend, I can work more.

Unlucky in the men's race was last year's winner Sascha Weber, who had prepared himself especially for this race in Livigno, not far from the Engadine, for weeks. In a crash on the first stage he unfortunately injured his thumb. Although he was able to win the second stage, on the third stage the native Saarlander, who now lives in the mountain biking Mecca of the Black Forest, had to give up unexpectedly: "When we crossed a railway line, I realized that I could hardly ride down the long descent from the Sulfretta Pass with my damaged thumb, as beautiful as the trails are there. With a heavy heart, I decided to end the race early."

While the men's race was highly dramatic, the women's race was won by a sovereign, undisputed champion: with three stage wins in a total time of 9:33:37 hours, the 24-year-old Swiss rider Alessandra Keller (RN Thömus) also secured the overall victory for the Engadin Bike Giro, barely twenty minutes ahead of her compatriot Linda Indergand, who had started in the jersey of the Swiss national team. She laid the foundation for her overall victory in the climbs, where she lost hardly any time to her rivals. In the downhill, however, she played out her technical brilliance: "Today I already suffered a lot on the long climb. My legs were a bit tired from the last two days. It was really steep and really long," Keller described the climb over almost 1,000 metres of altitude in one go up to the Sulvretta Pass. She was rewarded, like all the other almost 500 participants, with the fantastic view and "really cool and really many trails" downhill. Keller had not expected to dominate the top-class race in such a way: "I didn't expect the overall victory to be so clear. But I felt very good in advance and was able to train well despite Corona. For me it was really time, even after my injury last year, to reach my full potential", said Keller, who is taking a break from her studies of pharmacy in order to prepare for the Olympic Games, after the finish directly at the famous Kite-Beach of Silvaplana. Her best result of the day was achieved by German Champion Elisabeth Brandau from Team Radon EBE-Racing. After she had not coped at all with the damp and cold weather during the second stage, the cross-country specialist, for whom climbs rarely take longer than a few minutes at a time, was able to manage the race over 3:43 hours better: "I don't know such a long climb from cross-country at all, I haven't even trained it this year. So I was afraid that it wouldn't be enough out the back." Brandau had lost the connection to Keller in a short downhill run before the long climb, but was able to close the gap again and at the highest point had a lead of about one minute over Keller. "But Alessandra caught up with me right away." The two rode together for a while before Keller accelerated and the German pulled away. At the finish, Brandau was 3:46 min behind Keller, which was enough for second place in the daily classification and also pushed Adelheid Morath (KS Trek, Freiburg) from third overall.

Downhill enthusiast Linda Indergand was also very enthusiastic about the "flowing trails" on today's day. But until she reached this point, the athlete from the canton of Uri had to "suffer a lot", as she stated at the finish. "But it's playing into my hands that the last descent was technically so difficult. It could always be like that," she beamed with sunshine at Silvaplana's kite beach. Her organizer Kai Sauser will be happy to fulfill her wish.



For him, the fifth edition of the Engadin Bike Giro was "a dream that the race was allowed to take place at all, that we were allowed to organize it and that the athletes were allowed to compete again", said Sauser with a view to the Corona pandemic: "It was a great atmosphere all weekend long. Everyone was really up for it again. It's just fun." Corona has given the organisers from Villingen-Schwenningen a new record number of participants despite Corona requirements and the hygiene concept. "Up to now, 300-400 athletes of all ages have competed in the Upper Engadine, this year it was 470", Sauser is pleased to report. Now he is looking ahead to the next major event of his event agency, the Rothaus Bike Giro in the Upper Black Forest. "So far we have the okay for 500 participants over four days."