



Luca Braidot is right on the target in San Zeno di Montagna

After a thrilling battle with Daniele Avondetto and Filippo Fontana, the Italian champion wins the first round of the Internazionali d'Italia series.

The Olympic season has only just begun, but **Luca Braidot** has already been confirmed as the number one in Italian MTB.

After a 7-lap race on the demanding Pineta Sperane XCO circuit, he beat the competition by arriving under the finish line arch with his arms raised.

There were 73 riders at the start and immediately the trio of **Luca Braidot** (Santa Cruz Rockshox Pro Team), **Simone Avondetto** (Wilier-Vittoria Factory Team XCO) and **Filippo Fontana** (CS Carabinieri Cicli Olympia) took the lead, thanks to a quick start by Fontana, who was very active in the early stages of the race.

The three outriders continued to ride together, extending their lead over their closest rivals, **Nadir Colledani** (Santa Cruz Rockshox Pro Team) and **Daniele Braidot** (CS Carabinieri Cicli Olympia).

At the start of the final lap, however, a deal was broken: at the sound of the bell, Avondetto made a lunge that did not surprise Luca Braidot, while Fontana was a few seconds behind.

In the final lap, the experience of the Italian champion prevailed over the U23 world champion, who finished 27 seconds behind. Fontana finished third at 1'17", fourth was Nadir Colledani at 2'06" and fifth was Andreas Vittone (KTM-Protek-Elettrosystem), the author of an excellent second half of the race, 3'14" behind the winner.

These are the words of Luca Braidot immediately after the finish:

"At the beginning of the race I really struggled to keep up with Fontana and Avondetto, so I stayed on the bike where it was easier to find the best tracks and save energy. In the last lap I felt good and was able to make up the difference. This Pineta Sperane XCO is a very beautiful course, you always have to pay attention. I wasn't expecting to win, so I'm even happier. My condition is improving and I hope to keep it up this Olympic season, which is very important for me".

Matteo Siffredi wins U23 title

The Scott Racing Team rider won the under-23 classification ahead of American **Brayden Christopher Johnson** (Santa Cruz Rockshox Pro Team) and Colombian **Franco Nelson Duван Pena** (Berria Polimeri).

Siffredi will wear the leader's jersey at the next round of the Internazionali d'Italia series in Esanatoglia on 30th March.