

Season Review 2026

My winter training for the 2026 season went better than the year before. Until mid-December I completed my remaining civilian service days at the Physical Meteorological Observatory in Davos (PMOD). During this time, I also had the plate that had been stabilising my metacarpal removed. This operation had a far smaller impact than the first one, and during my last weeks in Davos I was able to go cross-country skiing often and still get out on the bike every now and then. In Finale Ligure I survived a whole week without breaking any bones. Unfortunately, I couldn't pay my nemesis tree a visit, as the trails right at the top by the former NATO base were deep in snow.

Winter training at home also went well, and in March the first training camp in Portugal and Spain was already on the cards. In the border region between Portugal and Spain we prepared for the upcoming European Championships. Although it was often wet, I got some good training done and measured myself against the international competition in races for the first time.

Just over a week after returning from the south, selection races in the Vosges were on the programme. It was so cold and wet that we all went into a kind of shock. The races were more a fight for survival than a battle for fast times.

To keep the temperature rollercoaster going, I headed south with Selina straight after the selection races. We set off on another bikepacking adventure, this time starting in Padua and riding through the southern Italian Alps, with a few loops along the way, all the way to Domodossola. Even though lingering snow forced us to take a few alternative routes, we still caught a breath of summer air several times.

Once again, my birthday coincided with races in the Sesto Calende area. On the Saturday I treated myself to a present and won my second World Ranking Event! Unfortunately, in the long distance the following day I didn't manage to punch all the controls.

Just a week later things got going properly: we travelled to Lake Balaton in Hungary for the first round of the World Cup. We started with a few days of training on old maps, which were really challenging but enormous fun. In the semi-open terrain, you could ride cross-country anywhere and had to navigate just like on foot, but you were moving much faster. That felt incredible. Unfortunately, the World Cup races then took place in far less interesting terrain and were more physical. I'm moderately happy with my results; you'll find a more detailed World Cup report on my website.

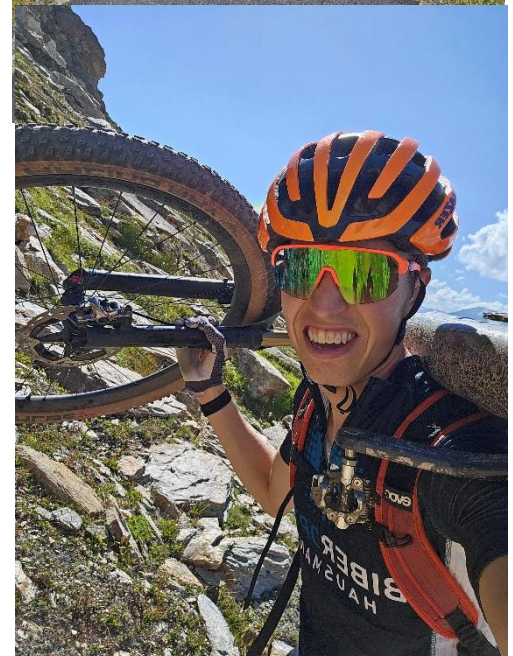


Then it was back home again, only to pack Noah's VW van full just two weeks later (and when I say full, I mean full, as the photo alongside shows ;D). After the warm temperatures in Hungary, we headed for even warmer ones in Portugal. In spring, the European Championships had to be moved to a different venue at short notice, as a storm had completely devastated the forests around Ourém. Apart from the sprint, I'm very happy with my races and was able to deliver good to very good performances in the individual races in the very flat terrain (didn't even know Portugal had anything like that?!). In the mixed relay, which I had the privilege of riding with double European champion Celine and top-six finisher Noah, I unfortunately had a complete shocker. After many years of clearly above-average relay performances, this race was very hard to digest. Once again, you'll find a full report on the European Championships on my website.

As the European Championships finished on a Thursday, some of us decided to spend a few more days in Portugal, only this time in holiday mode, with piña coladas on the beach in Lisbon or surfing in Nazaré.

The four weeks after the European Championships were dominated by several races in France (Dijon and Nancy), another selection race, a free weekend and further races in France and Switzerland. This period was very demanding, and I reached my limits several times – not so much my physical limits as my mental ones.

Mid-July brought the O-Ringen in Gothenburg. Although the terrain in Gothenburg is completely different from that in Mora, where the World Championships will take place in August, it was still a chance to get to grips with the Swedish peculiarities of MTBO. However, the preparation for the O-Ringen could hardly have gone worse. I had organised the accommodation for the entire Swiss team, and the travel for some of them. Three days before our arrival in Sweden, the landlord informed me that we could not move into the house for 15 people we had booked, as they had (at some point or other) sold it. So, on top of the usual stress at work before going on holiday, I now also had to find new accommodation. Easier said than done when an event with around 20,000 to 30,000 people is taking place in a city. In the end, the landlord was able to offer me an alternative. However, we now had to split up across two different places, one of which was rather remote. Both were filthy hovels with neither charm nor order. At least the landlord paid for a hire car for the whole stay, giving us some degree of mobility. The first race went terribly. I had empty legs and little concentration, and towards the end I came down pretty hard on my shoulder. The bruising hindered me less than expected in the following races, so I was able to climb the overall standings a little each day. The best was the final chasing start: I moved up from 8th to 4th overall and had great fun in the technically demanding terrain, which I was able to ride with a fully functioning shoulder again.



After a short interlude in Valais, which I mainly used to recover mentally, it was on to the World Championships.

Before the World Championships, we spent a few days in Norway, where we were allowed to train on Emily Benham-Kvale's maps. These are said to be particularly similar to the terrain in Mora, and Emily also trained with us for a few days as part of her comeback. Unfortunately, I was ill for most of my time in Norway. I must have picked something up on the journey: I spent one day in bed with a fever and another on the loo with diarrhoea. The World Championships then turned out rather differently from what I had expected. The technically very demanding races never materialised; the courses were considerably easier than anticipated. In the flat, sandy terrain I struggled to achieve good placings, even though I'm largely satisfied with my performances. Fortunately, different rules apply in the relay, and mistakes get made even on easy courses. We, however, managed to complete our three legs almost without error and took the bronze medal as a result. Winning a medal in Sweden again after four years without one felt really good. Accordingly, the joy in the team was huge, especially as the women followed suit and also took bronze! We celebrated our success at the banquet, where we teamed up with the French team on our outfits: we came as French, they came as Swiss (or at least they tried – most of them looked more like Austrians...).

Fortunately, summer in Switzerland was far from over after the World Championships. My post-Worlds programme was almost more strenuous than the training beforehand. I filled my weekends with plenty of bike tours in the Alps and really enjoyed this time without any sporting commitments.

Finally, all that remains is a big thank you to everyone who has supported me! Starting with my club OLG Biberist, through my sponsors Biberoptik (who have been supporting me for ten years!), Zirbel and Sponser, to the Solothurn Cantonal Sports Fund and the MTBO support team. Without your support, I wouldn't be able to do MTBO the way I do – thank you for that! And last but not least: merci, Chrige, for your many years as my coach – thank you for everything!

