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## **Head-to-head for gold rewards the Swiss Halter in the XCO 15 in Pila**

Swiss Nicolas Halter is the new 15-year-old European XCO champion, a title won this morning in Pila (Aosta Valley), on the last day of the continental youth festival. A tactical race, which rewards the Swiss, good at making a void in the most challenging point of the track, beating the tough Spanish Hugo Franco Gallego, silver, with third step of the podium that goes to the Danish Albert Philipsen.

Four laps for the first race of the day, and a saving pace to save energy for the final, which is certainly challenging both physically and mentally. Halfway through the track they are still all in single file and the first ten are enclosed in a matter of seconds. The pace is dictated by the Danish international Albert Philipsen, who in the segment leading to the finish area brings with him the Spanish Hugo Franco Gallego (MontBike Cycling Team) and the Dutch Keije Solen (Team Hobij), a trio that closes the first lap in 12'35 "; behind them, at 3 "50, the couple made up of the other Danish national Nikolaj Hougs and the Swiss Nicolas Halter (Swiss Cycling National Team) and, 8" from the summit, solo the Belgian Bram Tiesters (Optimun Argentina).

Second round and identical canvas, with the leading trio Halter-Gallego-Philipsen to dictate the pace, with some skirmish and attempt to reach, or just to test the best points to try to overtake. The three pass through the finish area in 25'33 ", leaving Solen at 5", while Hougs loses his wheels, who is delayed by 32 "; the best of the Azzurri, 10th, is Luca Fregara, delayed by 1'17 ".

Leading trio that continues in command for almost all 3.4 km of the track; on the straight that leads under the finish line the first shock: Nicolas Halter and Hugo Franco Gallego increase their cadences, they pass in 38'31, while Albert Philipsen loses contact, who accuses 3 "55 of delay. All the others out of the game, specifically Keije Solen, at 55 ", and Nikolaj Hougs, at 1'12. Luca Fregata, the best of the Azzurri, makes up two positions, while accusing 1'50 "from the top, who is in eighth position.

The two leaders increase the pace again, and the race is decided in the 'Plan Bois' area, with Nicolas Halter who manages to put meters of difference between himself and Hugo Franco Gallego. I arrive with arms raised, after 51'13 "of the Swiss, with Hugo Franco Gallego who closes with a delay of 9.10". Third, at 37 ", the Danish Albert Philipsen, long with the two leaders, who paid for the first extension operated at the start of the third lap. Fourth was the Dutch Keije Solen, at 1'47 ", and fifth the other Dane Nikolaj Hougs, with a delay of 1'58". Luca Fregata closes eighth, at 2'52 ".

At 12, the second Xco race of the morning, reserved for 15 years old women.

