

## Peat At Last!

It's rare that a race course upstages the racers in downhill mountain biking, but this was the case here at Snoqualmie Pass on a picture-perfect Sunday when the outrageous *Briton*, **Steve Peat** (GT) and cool-headed **Anne-Caroline Chausson** (FRA, Sunn-Un) triumphed in a battle against an unruly series of bumps and turns in the Pacific Northwest.



Snoqualmie Pass may not be on the longest or steepest mountainside in the world, but it hosted one of the most thrilling downhill spectacles thus far this season and raised the bar for this growing sport's talented riders.

After cold rains in the days before the event, a drier Sunday left a fast line carved by bicycle tyres on the dark soil. Riders took their campaign for world cup points to two runs in front of 4,000 spectators.

### MEN:

This was the result that Steve Peat had been promising the world for more than two years. The big Yorkshireman had run fast practice times all weekend and the ultra technical track was to his liking. He took the rocky section at the top in his stride and then calmly attacked the Black Forest, which contains the daunting "*Junior Wall*". This rapid-fire series of obstacles produced a flurry of finesse moves from Peat on the frighteningly steep, loose single track. He quietly

leapt over the six-foot sheer, rocky drop of the Junior Wall, and with several hundred spectators lining the course cheering him loudly he hurtled onwards to the precipitous chute section, with only the faintest disturbance of the soil beneath his tyres.



So steep and treacherous was the chute that fans actually came out to watch Saturday's practice. What few pros that could actually ride fast through here had their speed measured by the volume of the cheers, and Peat received some of the loudest. After flitting cleanly through the trees and power-peddalling the flat sections below, Peat went on to capture his best finish yet. After placing second on two of the toughest courses of all: Panticosa '96 and Mont-St-Anne last season, this fearless rider finally got what he had been waiting for.

"It's rad," he said after his victory - his time of 3:55 had stood solid while **Nicolas Vouilloz** (FRA, Sunn-Un), **Cédric**

**Gracia** (FRA, Sunn-Un) and top-qualifier **Shaums March** (USA, Zzyzx/Ellsworth) completed their runs. With the win in the bag, Peat breathed a big sigh of relief and said: "*It's been a long time coming but today I nailed it and I'm stoked to win... I like this course a lot and have been good in training all week. I knew I could do it today so I went for it, and it happened.*"

While most of the top qualifiers could have been named straight off the top of the UCI Rankings list, one Shaums March (ranked 59th in the world) surprised everybody by gaining the fastest qualification time with a ride that literally wowed the crowd in the trees. Peat himself would have been impressed by the way March

hared down the Junior Wall. Unfortunately, come the final run, two crashes destroyed his rear wheel and March was forced to, er, walk stridently to the finish.

Vouilloz - round one's winner - has been slowed down since injuring his hand in Big Bear training but today he was still fast enough for second place on a course where, as the world's top technical rider, he would dearly loved to have won. *"I knew that to win I'd have to ride very well with no mistakes,"* he said. "Now I'm happy to go home and recover."

**David Vazquez** (ESP, Volvo-Cannondale) and Gracia were 3rd and 4th, respectively. Vazquez, last round's winner, beat out Gracia, round two's winner, by 3.4 seconds. One-tenth of a second later was round three's winner **Christian Taillefer** (FRA, Peugeot Palaiseau) who announced that he had dreamt he would take fifth here today.

In an unprecedented turn of statistics, all of the top five men today have won a world cup round this season. If that is not a measure of the course's quality, then what is?

## WOMEN:

In the women's race, Chausson was in a league of her own. She won the semi-final by 26 seconds over second fastest **Marla Streb** (USA, Yeti), then in the final she eclipsed her semis time by 16 seconds and was nearly 28 seconds faster than second place finisher **Mercedes Gonzalez** (ESP, GT).

*"I knew I could do well here today,"* she said, explaining her strategy. *"I was up top at the start and heard the time of Missy, so I told myself not to go too fast and I thought I could win. I went easy in the technical part and pedalled a bit harder than in qualifying."*

Chausson winning on the World Cup circuit has become an increasingly familiar sight. The World Champion is now back at her best after a (literally) rocky season start where she injured her back in a crash on the dolomite at Nevegal. The indefatigable Frenchwoman has now won four of the five rounds thus far this season and holds the orange World Cup leader's jersey. After next round, riders will start to discard their lowest scores in the process of selecting their five best results from the eight race series. In the discard period, Chausson, the five-times World Champion, will go even closer to winning her first World Cup trophy.

Chausson was not the only happy woman here today. For second place finisher Gonzalez, today's result was a victory unto itself: the Spanish GT rider has been stung by bad luck this season and a strong result was just what she needed. *"I had a little luck going my way. I rode a little bit on the edge, a little out of control and when I hit pedaling sections I rode my heart out,"* said the ever gracious Gonzalez.

**Missy Giove** (USA, Volvo-Cannondale), whose will to win has a tendency to approximate to the severity of her injury, dislocated her ankle in practice. She went on to take third place.

## Race Notes

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- **Leigh Donovan** (USA, Mongoose) broke a finger in practice and sat out the race
  - The accident prone **Helen Mortimer** (GBR, Sintesi Verlicchi) crashed during practice and was knocked unconscious. Reportedly she will be out of action for at least 3 weeks.
  - **Mike King** (USA, GT) crashed in practice and dislocated his shoulder. Reportedly he will be out for several weeks.

**DH#5- Men/Hommes**

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<i>pos</i>	<i>bib</i>	<i>name/nom</i>		<i>nat</i>	<i>UCIcode</i>	<i>time</i>
1	10	PEAT	STEVE	GBR	GBR19740617	: 3:55.23
2	2	VOUILLOZ	NICOLAS	FRA	FRA19760208	: 3:58.13
3	1	VAZQUEZ	DAVID	ESP	ESP19790210	: 4:00.26
4	4	GRACIA	CÉDRIC	FRA	FRA19780329	: 4:03.66
5	20	TAILLEFER	CHRISTIAN	FRA	FRA19700829	: 4:03.76
6	28	BONANOMI	GIANLUCA	ITA	ITA19680219	: 4:05.55
7	6	KLAUSMANN	MARCUS	GER	GER19770808	: 4:05.76
8	3	ENGSTRÖM	JOHAN	SWE	SWE19770802	: 4:08.09
9	55	ROCKWELL	MYLES	USA	USA19720822	: 4:08.35
10	23	LAGNEAU	CYRIL	FRA	FRA19760719	: 4:08.53
11	11	LOPES	BRIAN	USA	USA19710908	: 4:11.08
12	5	PASCAL	MICKAEL	FRA	FRA19791011	: 4:11.23
13	22	AMOUR	KARIM	FRA	FRA19750118	: 4:11.77
14	15	SHARPLES	SCOTT	AUS	AUS19671023	: 4:12.02
15	67	JANY	STÉPHANE	FRA	FRA19730717	: 4:12.85
16	14	POUSSIN	FLORENT	FRA	FRA19770306	: 4:13.14
17	17	KOCH	GUILLAUME	FRA	FRA19730605	: 4:13.22
18	24	MCCARROLL	SEAN	AUS	AUS19771105	: 4:13.45
19	7	BENEKE	JÜRGEN	GER	GER19720223	: 4:13.51
20	9	CARTER	ERIC	USA	USA19700306	: 4:15.04
21	35	WARNER	ROBERT	GBR	GBR19700916	: 4:15.87
22	79	CALUORI	CLAUDIO	SUI	SUI19770916	: 4:16.41
23	34	BALAUD	ALEXANDRE	FRA	FRA19750227	: 4:16.77
24	38	KIRKCALDIE	JOHN	NZL	NZL19760430	: 4:16.96
25	62	WATSON	DAVID	CAN	CAN19760523	: 4:17.16
26	30	STEFFEN	ANDREAS	SUI	SUI19750923	: 4:17.55
27	33	PURDY	JEREMY	USA	USA19691126	: 4:18.16
28	68	BALAUD	WILLIAM	FRA	FRA19770217	: 4:18.29
29	12	DE BEVER	BAS	NED	NED19680416	: 4:19.14
30	75	SANTANA	JACOBO	ESP	ESP19720217	: 4:19.30
31	86	STOCKTON	DERIN	USA	USA19681030	: 4:19.38
32	60	POLC	FILIP	SVK	SVK19820410	: 4:19.69
33	8	VOREIS	KIRT	USA	USA19740531	: 4:19.92
34	113	O'BRIEN	GLYN	IRL	IRL19770906	: 4:19.95
35	58	BÜELER	ANDY	SUI	SUI19780609	: 4:20.79
36	19	MISSER	PAU	ESP	ESP19760807	: 4:22.37
37	31	GARDELLA	MAXIME	FRA	FRA19780220	: 4:22.40
38	45	TINSTMAN	PHILIP	USA	USA19740816	: 4:22.86
39	78	BERCHTOLD	MARKOLF ERASMU	BRA	BRA00000000	: 4:22.87
40	125	HOUSEMAN	RICHARD	USA	USA19780320	: 4:23.48
41	117	MCDANIEL	BART	USA	USA19640221	: 4:24.29

42	44	ZANCHI	BRUNO	ITA	ITA19731110	: 4:24.62
43	74	SIGFRID	JASON	USA	USA19730223	: 4:25.34
44	39	KRUIPER	MICHEL	NED	NED19730920	: 4:25.44
45	13	HERIN	CORRADO	ITA	ITA19660604	: 4:26.48
46	141	DAVIS	MARK	GBR	GBR19740326	: 4:27.12
47	72	GEALL	STEVE	GBR	GBR19700506	: 4:27.55
48	36	JOSEPH	MICHEL	SUI	SUI19761109	: 4:27.87
49	49	RONNING	MICHAEL	AUS	AUS19750623	: 4:28.46
50	82	LAWWILL	JOE	USA	USA19700506	: 4:29.76
51	90	MCDUGALL	MARK	AUS	AUS19780430	: 4:30.50
52	21	SAIZ	OSCAR	ESP	ESP19730828	: 4:33.48
53	116	NICKULL	DUANE	CAN	CAN19640415	: 4:34.55
54	98	NABESHIMA	KENICHI	JPN	JPN19721221	: 4:37.29
55	133	NORDEE	TONY	CAN	CAN19711026	: 4:38.67
56	150	BALLI	ANDREA	ITA	ITA19750527	: 4:39.81
57	155	LANGER	DAVID	USA	USA19700513	: 4:54.57
58	124	ADAMS	DUSTIN	CAN	CAN19800531	: 5:03.93
59	25	MIGLIORINI	STEFANO	ITA	ITA19690708	: 5:03.94
60	81	TAKKENKAMP	RICK	NED	NED19780213	: 5:07.37
61	56	PONTING	TIM	GBR	GBR19721010	: 5:09.59
62	46	VAN DE HATERD	WILFRED	NED	NED19720125	: 5:14.76
63	102	SEARS	ROB	USA	USA19700729	: 5:16.58
64	52	MARCH	SHAUMS	USA	USA19740216	: 5:55.98
65	84	AMHERD	STEFAN	SUI	SUI19730605	:17:32.34
0	26	PETERS	GERWIN	NED	NED19770409	DNF
0	122	PORTER	TREVOR	CAN	CAN19720629	DNF
0	114	VICK	IRA	USA	USA19740101	DNF
0	42	HOLE	WOODY	GBR	GBR19670628	DNF
0	128	MELANCON	GIRARD	USA	USA19740211	DNF