

DH:#7 : KAPRUN, AUT - 11-12.8.2001

Minnaar Wins South Africa's First, Chausson Nearly Perfect

The penultimate round of the **Tissot-UCI Mountain Bike World Cup** featured exciting downhill racing in *Austria* Saturday, as thousands of fans lined the long and slippery course in Kaprun to watch their favorite riders go for the win - as the season winds down and the competition heats up. Under cool cloudy skies, the world's best competed in the first of this weekend's four big events.



And all were treated to a thrilling men's final where 19-year-old **Greg Minnaar** (RSA, *Global Racing Team*) earned his (and his team's) first-ever world cup victory by taking a narrow win on a tricky 2.5 km course. **Anne-Caroline Chausson** (FRA, *Volvo-Cannondale*) also won, earning her sixth victory this season.

At a young nineteen years of age, **Greg Minnaar** is a rider whose star has been on the rise all season. Signed to the new *Global Racing Team* this season, Minnaar earned three podium berths this season, including a then-career's best second place last week in Leysin. But he topped even that this week, winning a world cup final over the sport's top riders. In doing so, he became the first *South African* to win a mountain bike world cup final.



Greg Minnaar, RSA

Minnaar qualified fastest in the morning's semi-final, indicating that he was able to master Kaprun's long, pedaling course. When he came down the mountain it was **Cedric Gracia** (FRA, *Volvo-Cannondale*) who occupied the hotseat, as this sixth-fastest qualifier sat and watched the clock to see if he might win his career's second world cup.

Some of the sport's top men had failed to beat Gracia's time of six minutes, seven seconds - including **Mickael Pascal** (FRA, *Be-One Team*), **Steve Peat** (GBR, *Team GT*) and the #2 qualifier, world cup series leader **Nicolas Vouilloz** (FRA, *Vouilloz Racing Team*).

With just seconds remaining in the final run of the day, the clock showed that Minnaar was several seconds off the winning pace at the course's mid-point. But Gracia knew better than to relax, as he later said that he was all too aware of Minnaar's pedaling abilities. *"I knew that Greg would be close, or even beat me,"* said Gracia afterward.

And Minnaar did just that, rolling under the Tissot finishline with a time of 6:06.89 - just .89 of a second faster than Gracia - the day's runner up. He flew into the barriers and was immediately surrounded by his team staff and the other top finishers, who congratulated him on his first win.

Afterward he recounted *"I had some hassles this morning, but my qualifier was pretty good even though I crashed in it. In the final I just wanted to get down the top section smoothly and not crash - after that it came down to pedaling and I just went for it. I don't know where I got the power, but I can tell you I couldn't do it again!"*

With the 250 points he earned for winning both the semi-final and final run, Minnaar moved up from fourth overall to second, just 28 points from the top position. *"My goal was top ten this season, but I had to adjust that to top-five mid-season. I have one more world cup, and a top-five would be a dream,"* he said.

Gracia was satisfied to earn second place and improve on last week's third place. *"I had a good ride today and felt that my bike was working well, and that's the most important thing for me. I didn't ride this winter and so didn't have good form early in the season - and it took some time to get used to my bike. The best thing is that my bike, and everything, is going well now."*

Nicolas Vouilloz finished third for the day, after crashing near the bottom of the course and losing too much time to earn his season's second victory. While he is happy that he continues to lead the world cup, he is a bit mystified why he has crashed so many times this season - putting the overall title within striking distance of several riders.

"I rode safely and conservative today, but I crashed anyway and I don't know why," he said afterward. *"It was hard to stay on the bike today, and I crashed on a rocky section near the finish and went over the front of my bike. But I hung on to it and didn't lose too much time. But Greg and Mickael are close in the overall, and if I keep this up I will lose the world cup for sure."*

Next stop on the Tissot-UCI Mountain Bike World Cup is the final round in **Mont Sainte-Anne, Quebec, Canada.**

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words: Ari Cheren



Peat | Gracia | **Minnaar** | Vouilloz | Misser

Rk	#	UCI Code	Surname	Firstname	Team	Time	Gap
1	4	RSA19811113	MINNAAR	Greg	GLOBAL RACING	6:06.89	0
2	6	FRA19780323	GRACIA	Cedric	VOLVO CANNONDALE	6:07.78	0.89
3	1	FRA19760208	VOUILLOZ	Nicolas	VOUILLOZ RACING TEAM	6:10.31	3.42
4	10	GBR19740617	PEAT	Steve	TEAM GT	6:14.38	7.49
5	19	ESP19740930	MISSE VILASECA	Tomas	REAL FEDERACION ESPANOLA DE CICLISMO	6:15.93	9.04
6	32	FRA19760719	LAGNEAU	Cyril	TAILLEFER BICYCLES	6:18.90	12.01
7	39	ESP19790210	VAZQUEZ LOPEZ	David	GIANT	6:20.88	13.99
8	3	FRA19791011	PASCAL	Mickael	BE-ONE	6:22.93	16.04
9	17	CZE19780529	MAROSI	Michal	AUTHOR RB SKODA AUTO	6:24.92	18.03
10	29	ESP19760807	MISSE VILASECA	Pau	REAL FEDERACION ESPANOLA DE CICLISMO	6:24.97	18.08
11	34	SUI19761023	WILDHABER	Rene	SWITZERLAND	6:25.71	18.82
12	15	SUI19770916	CALUORI	Claudio	SWITZERLAND	6:26.27	19.38
13	12	USA19700306	CARTER	Eric	MONGOOSE HYANDAI	6:27.09	20.2
14	16	GBR19700916	WARNER	Rob	GIANT TOYOTA	6:28.26	21.37
15	7	AUS19771105	MCCARROLL	Sean	GLOBAL RACING	6:28.41	21.52
16	95	FIN19840419	LEHIKONEN	Matti	23 DEGREES	6:28.79	21.9
17	25	SVK19820410	POLC	Filip	AUTHOR - RB SKODA AUTO	6:29.43	22.54
18	26	GER19770808	KLAUSMANN	Marcus	MK RACING	6:29.62	22.73
19	9	ESP19730828	SAIZ	Oscar	BE-ONE	6:30.65	23.76
20	86	GBR19770421	MOSELEY	Ed	ANIMAL ORANGE	6:31.81	24.92
21	48	GBR19741120	LONGDEN	Will	TEAM MOUNTAINBIKING UK	6:31.83	24.94
22	81	NED19720125	VAN DER HATERD	Wilfred	HOLLAND	6:33.09	26.2
23	28	GBR19720201	PAGE	Nigel	INTENSE	6:33.40	26.51
24	64	FRA19820124	POOMANS	Julien	VOUILLOZ RACING TEAM	6:34.01	27.12
25	33	FRA19750110	AMOUR	Karim	DIAMONDBACK	6:34.75	27.86
26	43	GBR19700526	CARRICK- ANDERSON	Crawford	GIANT TOYOTA	6:35.12	28.23
27	27	USA19740531	VOREIS	Kirt	HARO/LEE DUNGAREES	6:35.50	28.61
28	11	AUS19750623	RONNING	Michael	INTENSE CYCLES	6:35.58	28.69
29	42	ITA19660804	HERIN	Corrado	TEAM SINTESI	6:36.78	29.89
30	38	GBR19721010	PONTING	Tim	GIANT TOYOTA	6:36.87	29.98
31	72	LAT19800702	SKOLINS	Zigmars	23 DEGREES	6:38.26	31.37
32	82	SUI19780409	RYSER	Thomas	SWITZERLAND	6:39.31	32.42
33	80	NED19800318	THOLEN	Gertje	HOLLAND	6:39.59	32.7
34	54	SUI19750923	STEFFEN	Andreas	SWITZERLAND	6:39.65	32.76
35	59	ESP19790604	OULEGO MORENO	Ivan	ST ANDREU DE LA BARCA	6:40.90	34.01
36	83	IRL19770906	O ´BRIEN	Glyn	IRISH CYCLING FEDERATION	6:40.99	34.1
37	57	GBR19801009	BARLOW	Richard	ROYAL RACING	6:41.20	34.31
38	85	ESP19820930	GUARDIA PASCUAL	Bernat	KASTLE CAIXA GALICIA	6:41.30	34.41
39	91	ESP19700428	BARCONS GONZALEZ	Carlos	ORANGE MARZOCCHI	6:41.96	35.07
40	50	ITA19731110	ZANCHI	Bruno	TEAM BIKE O CLOCK	6:42.09	35.2
41	131	GBR19840925	BEAUMONT	Mark	ROYAL RACING	6:43.66	36.77
42	31	FRA19840107	CAMELLINI	Julien	VOUILLOZ RACING TEAM	6:44.33	37.44
43	51	NOR19800506	EVENSEN	Tommy	STORO MTB/N	6:44.83	37.94
44	121	GER19781225	SCHATZKI	David	MOUNTAINBIKE RIDER	6:45.38	38.49

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45	176	ESP19801004	PONS FIGUERAS	Edu	MAXXIS MSC	6:45.74	38.85
46	113	CRO19750120	ANTIC	Nino	B.K. RIJEKA	6:46.27	39.38
47	114	FRA19830808	COLIN	Benoit	FRANCE	6:47.35	40.46
48	207	NZL19710216	SISARICH	Glen		6:47.57	40.68
49	128	FRA19780418	BONHOMME	David	FRANCE	6:49.51	42.62
50	53	GBR19810817	DONOGHUE	Neil	HALFORDS BIKEHUT/SCHWINN	6:49.73	42.84
51	133	SUI19781121	BIERI	Andreas	KRAFTWERK GT DELEC	6:50.49	43.6
52	74	JPN19800422	IDEGAWA	Naoki	GLOBAL RACING	6:51.00	44.11
52	93	SUI19810120	MERMOUD	Damien	SWITZERLAND	6:51.00	44.11
54	61	GER19781003	SCHNEIDER	Frank	SOCAL - NICOLAI	6:54.96	48.07
55	188	GBR19751220	BUTTERFILL	Peter	BRITISH CYCLING FEDERATION	6:54.95	48.06
56	129	FRA19791018	MULLER	Simeon	MUDDY FOX	6:55.84	48.95
57	55	CZE19780316	HYNCICA	Vlastimil	GRAFOBAL - SEMTEX	6:58.12	51.23
58	125	ESP19780424	BAGO	Jordi	BICIMANIA ORANGE ESPANA	6:58.47	51.58
59	92	JPN19761223	KANEKO	Daisaku	GLOBAL RACING	6:59.36	52.47
60	99	FRA19810411	STOCLET	Benoit	UCP LOUDIAC	6:59.51	52.62
61	190	GER19640213	HERRMANN	Stefan	STEPPENWOLF	6:59.66	52.77
62	62	USA19730308	O' DRISCOLL	Chris	RAZOR ROCK MTN CYCLE	7:00.89	54
63	115	FRA19840531	CLEMENTZ	Jerome	FRANCE	7:03.12	56.23
64	150	FRA19840912	SAUT	Vincent	FRANCE	7:04.99	58.1
65	189	GBR19800316	BUTTERFILL	Matthew	BRITISH CYCLING FEDERATION	7:05.34	58.45
66	134	GER19771207	BOETTNER	Jens	SOCAL - NICOLAI	7:06.38	59.49
67	109	AUT19810330	HAAS	Mathias	BANK AUSTRIA NATIONALTEAM	7:06.76	59.87
68	103	ESP19781012	BARTOLO	Pau	SPECIALIZED	7:06.95	+1:00.06
69	94	JPN19770605	TAKEMOTO	Masashi	ANCHOR	7:07.50	+1:00.61
70	116	GER19760412	STRATMANN	Dennis	FIAT ROTWILD	7:07.55	+1:00.66
71	112	SUI19790209	ARCHER	Jeffrey	TWO RACING	7:09.23	+1:02.34
72	132	FRA19721004	FICHANT	Stephane	FRANCE	7:15.74	+1:08.85
73	101	GER19790209	WAGENKNECHT	Andre	MOUNTAINBIKE DOWNHILL MAGAZINE	7:19.48	+1:12.59
74	142	SLO19730413	JAMNIK	Janez	KD PREVALJE	7:24.41	+1:17.52
75	58	GER19760514	TSCHUGG	Guido	WHEELER	8:08.74	+2:01.85
76	143	CZE19840828	MATUS	Filip	GRAFOBAL - SEMTEX	8:10.59	+2:03.70
	136	GBR19741030	FARMER	Matt	DIAMOND BACK	DSQ	
	52	GBR19810815	JARMAN	Rob	HALFORDS BIKEHUT/SCHWINN	DNF	
	84	AUT19730618	PETSCHENIG	Markus	BANK AUSTRIA NATIONALTEAM	DNF	
	138	ESP19791001	GONZALEZ SALVADOR	Roger	REAL FEDERACION ESPANOLA DE CICLISMO	DNF	