

MTB World Cup DH #1 - CDM

Maribor, Slovenia, May 9-11, 2008

May 11: Downhill,

Hill, Jonnier continue reign in Slovenia

By Luke Webber in Maribor, Slovenia – cyclingnews.com

There were no surprises in the final downhill races to open the 2008 World Cup, as dream team Sam Hill and Sabrina Jonnier opened the Iron Horse account in the same fashion they ended 2007 – with two wins. The world champion pair took their wins in a very different fashion.

For Hill it was nothing short of total domination when it mattered most. In training and then qualification the Aussie tried to play his cards close to his chest setting steady if not unimpressive times.

On a dry and dusty descent that weaved in and out of the woods through fast turns and a crowd's favourite rock garden there could be no tactics. The fastest rider would win.

Hill was that man and just as he did last week in the World Championship test event, he beat a host of top names by an embarrassing margin – three seconds to Julien Cammelini and four seconds to Steve Peat.

In the race run it was the rock garden at half-way that provided the most obvious place to spot differences in speed. Unfortunately this section also claimed its fair share of victims including Sam Blenkinsop and most spectacularly Josh Bryceland in an over the bars summersault crash from the bottom drop off.

First rider to look truly fast through here was Greg Minnaar with a bruising run through the bumps. Although Peat looked well in control his exit onto the fireroad was sluggish, surely costing him a vital second or so. Hill mixed both skill and speed, careering through the rocks and showing superb fitness, sprinting the fireroad exit and gaining vital speed.

For Hill's team-mate Jonnier however, the victory was much narrower. Just eighteen hundredths of a second separated her and hot favourite Rachel Atherton, who had won the semi-finals by a massive five seconds.

After the race, Atherton was clearly unhappy that the result did not reflect the effort invested over the weekend and winter, citing a number of errors in key sections of the race. Even so, these two riders distanced themselves considerably from the chasers – Emmeline Ragot who took the final podium placing was seven seconds adrift of the leading two ladies.

Downhill competition returns alongside fourcross and cross country in two weeks time in Andorra for a packed World Cup weekend.

Results

Elite Women

1	Sabrina Jonnier (Fra)	Team Maxxis	3.14.31
2	Rachel Atherton (GBr)	Animal Commencal	3.14.49
3	Emmeline Ragot (Fra)	Suspension Center	3.21.80
4	Fionn Griffiths (GBr)	Norco World Team	3.23.61
5	Floriane Pugin (Fra)	Playbiker - Iron Horse	3.23.95
6	Celine Gros (Fra)	Solid Aclass Factory Team	3.25.98
7	Tracy Moseley (GBr)	Kona	3.26.89
8	Mio Suemasa (Jpn)	MS-Intense Factory-Racing	3.29.54
9	Petra Bernhard (Aut)		3.33.45
10	Myriam Nicole (Fra)		3.34.78
11	Claire Buchar (Can)		3.35.81
12	Miriam Ruchti (Swi)	Sport Promotion	3.37.83
13	Katy Curd (GBr)		3.38.27
14	Anais Pajot (Fra)	Team Sunn	3.39.33
15	Anita Molcik (Aut)	4 Elements Yeti/Hotec/Rsp	3.40.27
16	Kathleen Pruitt (USA)		3.40.48
17	Joanna Petterson (RSA)		3.43.86
18	Dalma Kiss (Hun)		3.47.63
19	Birgit Braumann (Aut)		3.49.30
20	Pascaline Reusser (Swi)		3.52.13
