

MTB World Cup XC #9 & DH #7 - CDM

Schladming, Austria, September 11-14, 2008

September 13: Elite men downhill

Blenkinsop claims first victory

By Luke Webber in Schladming – cyclingnews.com

Sam Blenkinsop has made history by recording New Zealand's first ever World Cup victory, here in Schladming. After consistent results in the top ten throughout the year the Yeti Cycles rider clearly enjoyed the steep Schladming track that rewarded a loose style of riding.

Blenkinsop qualified in the number one position but most expected the finals to be dominated by the race for the overall World Cup title, between Greg Minnaar (Santa Cruz Syndicate) and Sam Hill (Monster Energy). Finishing fourth and sixth meant the pressure was on the final run and when Minnaar made it to the top of the hill, it was clear the strain was showing.

A quiet and almost secretive atmosphere was the order, as turbos buzzed before the main event got underway. First down the hill was Minnaar and despite a small mistake in the top section he inherited the hotseat from Justin Leov. Steve Peat (Santa Cruz Syndicate), however, made sure that Minnaar's reign was short-lived and in theory could have ended his teammates hope of the overall win by bumping him down the rankings.



Greg Minnaar took the series
Photo ©: Luke Weber

As it came to Hill's turn, it was obvious that the Australian phenomenon had saved everything in reserve for his final run. Up at the split and gaining constantly Hill then had a huge moment, the bike tankslapping across the infamous rutted Schaldming hillside only to miraculously save it and get back on track. This cost around a second but the quality of the run was enough to take the hot-seat and a real opportunity of rescuing the season with the overall title.

Hill's teammate Brendan Fairclough was the penultimate rider on course, posting the best split of the race but he crashed on the final drop onto the Schladming slopes. He scrambled back up and rescued his bike before rolling over the line just outside the top 20.

Finally, Blenkinsop took to the descent - everyone expected a solid top ten finish but this was the Kiwi's kind of course, and he revelled in the wet. After several gasps from the crowd there was finally a shocked roar as he dropped into the arena clearly beating Hill's time despite a mistake en route.

This result handed the overall World Cup title to Minnaar, an accolade he did not expect but one which was accepted very happily as the whole Santa Cruz Syndicate celebrated on the podium.

Results

1 Samuel Blenkinsop (NZl) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Rac	4.10.16
2 Samuel Hill (Aus) Monster Energy	0.01.64
3 Gee Atherton (GBr) Animal Commencal	0.02.20
4 Steve Peat (GBr) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.03.04
5 Greg Minnaar (RSA) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.07.40
6 Justin Leov (NZl) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Rac	0.08.17
7 Fabien Barel (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	0.08.33
8 Aaron Holmes Gwin (USA) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Rac	0.11.28
9 Mitchell Delfs (Aus) Kenda Tomac	0.11.44
10 Andrew Neethling (RSA) Gt Bicycles	0.11.71
11 Neil Donoghue (GBr) Team Bike Radar	0.11.96
12 Nathan Rankin (NZl) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.12.00
13 Oscar Saiz Castane (Spa) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.12.13
14 Julien Camellini (Fra) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.12.23
15 Mickael Pascal (Fra) Msc Bikes	0.12.25
16 Boris Tetzlaff (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.12.54
17 Amiel Cavalier (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.13.81
18 Joseph Smith (GBr) Tomac Factory Racing	0.13.84
19 Nathan Rennie (Aus) Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.14.24
20 Dan Atherton (GBr) Animal Commencal	0.14.38
21 Marc Beaumont (GBr) Team Bike Radar	0.14.65
22 Sam Dale (GBr) Cannondale Factory Racing	0.14.96
23 Filip Polc (Svk) Kenda Tomac	0.15.01
24 Brendan Fairclough (GBr) Monster Energy	0.15.48
25 Anton Ferreira Pajuelo (Spa) Massi	0.15.50
26 Steve Smith (Can)	0.15.61
27 Ben Ineson (GBr) Reverse Components	0.15.67
28 Thibaut Ruffin (Fra)	0.15.77
29 Damien Spagnolo (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	0.15.94
30 Marcus Klausmann (Ger) Team Ghost International	0.16.32
31 Bernat Guardia Pascual (Spa) Msc Bikes	0.17.48
32 Thomas Braithwaite (GBr)	0.17.59
33 Fabien Pedemanaud (Fra) Team Pyrenees Morewood	0.17.90
34 Adam Brayton (GBr) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.17.98
35 Nico Vink (Bel) Dolphin-Trek Mountainbike	0.18.04
36 David Vazquez Lopez (Spa) Lapierre Dh Powered By	0.18.20
37 Ruairidh Cunningham (GBr) Chain Reaction Cycle	0.18.26
38 Cyrille Kurtz (Fra)	0.18.64
39 Remi Thirion (Fra) Team Sunn	0.18.86
40 Markus Pekoll (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.19.51
41 Adam Vagner (Cze)	0.19.52
42 Bryn Atkinson (Aus) Gt Bicycles	0.20.13
43 Danny Hart (GBr) Lapierre Dh Powered By	0.20.34
44 Samuel Zbinden (Swi) Argentina Bike Gravity	0.20.48
45 Marcel Beer (Swi) Ixs Sports Division Racin	0.20.85
46 Georg Sieder (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.21.14
47 Luke Strobels (USA) Team Maxxis	0.21.28
48 Remy Charrier (Fra) Team Sunn	0.21.33
49 Toni Berg (Fin)	0.21.69
50 Ben Baker (GBr) Printexpress Uk Mtb Team	0.22.61
51 Pasqual Canals Flix (Spa) Massi	0.22.72
52 Cedric Gracia (Fra) Commencal - Furious - Oak	0.22.85
53 Joe Barnes (GBr)	0.23.29
54 Michael Skinner (NZl) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.23.30
55 Ralph Jones (GBr)	0.23.35
56 Ben Cathro (GBr) Mojo Orange	0.23.36
57 Rowan Sorrell (GBr)	0.23.52
58 Ben Reid (Irl)	0.23.61
59 David Smith (GBr)	0.24.01
60 Aguin Castro (Spa)	0.24.07
61 Pierre Georges (Fra)	0.24.13
62 Alan Beggin (Ita)	0.24.48
63 Jared Rando (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.24.79
64 Mathieu Troquier (Fra) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.24.83
65 Marco Bugnone (Ita)	0.25.09

66	David Eme (Fra)	0.25.15
67	Rhys Willemse (Aus) Tomac Factory Racing	0.25.35
68	Lorenzo Suding (Ita) Playbiker - Iron Horse	0.25.55
69	Duncan Riffle (USA) Cannondale Factory Racing	0.25.66
70	Florent Payet (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro	0.27.02
71	Daniel Wolfe (Irl)	0.28.07
72	Vlastimil Hyncica (Cze)	0.28.64
73	Fabien Cousinie (Fra)	0.29.64
74	Herman Olund (Swe)	0.32.76
75	Benny Strasser (Ger) Ixs Sports Division Racin	0.34.23
76	Espen Johnsen (Nor)	0.40.30
77	Andreas Sieber (Ger) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.47.01
78	Aki FOrn (Fin)	0.56.11
79	Nick Beer (Swi) Ixs Sports Division Racin	2.39.95
80	Chris Kovarik (Aus) Chain Reaction Cycle	5.42.48