

MTB World Cup DH & 4X #4 - CDM

Fort William, Scotland, Great Britain, June 5-7, 2009

June 7: Elite men downhill

Minnaar repeats Fort William win

By Rob Jones in Fort William – cyclingnews.com

The men's field at the fourth round of the Downhill World Cup in Fort William, Scotland had multiple candidates for the win - Steve Peat (Santa Cruz Syndicate) was coming off two consecutive wins, his teammate Greg Minnaar was defending champion here and second fastest in qualifying, World Champion Gee Atherton (Animal-Commencal) was fastest in qualifying, and Sam Hill (Specialized Factory Racing) won the world title on this course in 2007.

Australia's Brook MacDonald (Ancillotti Doganaccia) set the early fast time of 4:52.54, which stood up surprisingly well. It took 29 riders, over one-third of the field, before three-time World Champion Fabien Barel (Subaru MTB Team), in his first race back after a knee injury, finally took the best time, setting the bar below 4:50.



Greg Minnaar (Santa Cruz Syndicate) wins
Photo ©: Gary Perkin

"I'm super pleased to be back after seven weeks off," said Barel "I had quite a good run at the top, but then lost time at the bottom in the pedaling section."

Barel's time in the Hot Seat lasted through 15 riders before Chris Kovarik (Chain Reaction/Intense) knocked another second off the lead, followed a few minutes later by Canada's Steve Smith (MS Evil Racing). Justin Leov (Trek World Racing) soon after shaved another few tenths off before Aaron Gwin Holmes (Yeti Fox Shox) made the next major cut in the lead, down to 4:46.72.

The race was coming down to the final ten, and it was becoming apparent that only those riders with the fitness to pedal through the lower section into the finish had a chance to do well. Seconds were made or lost in the final 600 metres.



Junior World Champion Josh Bryceland (Santa Cruz Syndicate) briefly took the lead, and Matti Lehtikinen (MS Evil Racing) came close at eight to go, before Hill put in a tremendous ride to drop the lead to 4:40.43, with five riders remaining.

After this, it was Peat, who could only slot in four seconds behind Hill, then Sam Blenkinsop (Yeti Fox Shox), who came within a second and a half of Hill. The consistent Mick Hannah (GT Bicycles) assured himself of a fourth consecutive podium by finishing just behind Blenkinsop, and then it was the turn of Minnaar.

Gee Atherton (Animal Commencal)
Photo ©: Gary Perkin

Looking smooth and graceful, hugging the ground over jumps for extra speed, the South African winner of round one was clearly on a superb run; fastest at the first intermediate timer, four tenths slower than Hill at the second, but hitting 69.498

kilometres per hour through the speed trap near the bottom, well above anyone else, to finish 1.45 seconds ahead of Hill.

"I gave it my all," said Minnaar. "Sam put up an amazing time, and I really had to put it all out there at the bottom of the course."

However, there was still Atherton to come down, the fastest qualifier and with the support of a home crowd. Atherton started well, only one hundredth of a second behind Minnaar at the first time split, but couldn't maintain the pace, slipping to fourth by the finish line.



Steve Peat (Santa Cruz Syndicate), World Cup leader,
Photo ©: Gary Perkin

Peat's lead in the overall standings has slipped to a slim four points over teammate Minnaar at 762, with Atherton in third at 657 and Hannah at 652. The race for the overall title among the men is still very tight.

Results

| | | |
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| 1 | Greg Minnaar (RSA) Santa Cruz Syndicate | 4.38.98 |
| 2 | Samuel Hill (Aus) Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz | 0.01.45 |
| 3 | Samuel Blenkinsop (NZl) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team | 0.02.87 |
| 4 | Gee Atherton (GBr) Animal Commencal | 0.02.99 |
| 5 | Michael Hannah (Aus) GT Bicycles | 0.04.15 |
| 6 | Steve Peat (GBr) Santa Cruz Syndicate | 0.05.63 |
| 7 | Josh Bryceland (GBr) Santa Cruz Syndicate | 0.07.17 |
| 8 | Matti Lehtikainen (Fin) MS Evil Racing | 0.07.46 |
| 9 | Aaron Gwin (USA) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team | 0.07.74 |
| 10 | Marc Beaumont (GBr) GT Bicycles | 0.08.36 |
| 11 | Justin Leov (NZl) Trek World Racing | 0.09.35 |
| 12 | Steve Smith (Can) MS Evil Racing | 0.09.39 |
| 13 | Bernat Guardia Pascual (Spa) Massi | 0.09.41 |
| 14 | Chris Kovarik (Aus) Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense | 0.09.98 |
| 15 | Fabien Barel (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro Team | 0.10.91 |
| 16 | Fabien Pedemanaud (Fra) Scott 11 | 0.11.43 |
| 17 | Robin Wallner (Swe) | 0.11.54 |
| 18 | Nick Beer (Swi) Scott 11 | 0.12.07 |
| 19 | Duncan Riffle (USA) Duncan Riffle Racing | 0.12.18 |
| 20 | Danny Hart° (GBr) Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon | 0.12.45 |
| 21 | David Vazquez Lopez (Spa) Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon | 0.12.51 |
| 22 | Brendan Fairclough (GBr) Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz | 0.13.05 |
| 23 | Dan Stanbridge (GBr) | 0.13.19 |
| 24 | Luke Strobels (USA) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles | 0.13.51 |
| 25 | Brook Macdonald° (NZl) Ancillotti Doganaccia Racing Team | 0.13.56 |
| 26 | Joshua Button (Aus) | 0.13.89 |
| 27 | Lorenzo Suding (Ita) Dytech DH | 0.13.91 |
| 28 | Sam Dale (GBr) | 0.14.26 |
| 29 | Joseph Smith (GBr) Kona | 0.15.02 |
| 30 | Thomas Braithwaite (GBr) | 0.15.06 |
| 31 | Aurélien Giordanengo (Fra) | 0.15.21 |
| 32 | Jared Rando (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team | 0.15.49 |
| 33 | Ivan Oulego Moreno (Spa) Massi | 0.15.86 |
| 34 | Filip Polc (Svk) MS Evil Racing | 0.15.96 |
| 35 | Joris Bigoni (Fra) | 0.16.18 |
| 36 | Rémi Thirion (Fra) Team Sunn | 0.16.53 |
| 37 | Andrew Neethling (RSA) Trek World Racing | 0.16.63 |
| 38 | Ben Reid (Irl) Just Reid Race Team | 0.17.22 |
| 39 | Rhys Willemse° (Aus) | 0.17.47 |
| 40 | Nathan Rennie (Aus) Kenda Morewood | 0.17.68 |
| 41 | Marcus Klausmann (Ger) Ghost A.T.G. Pro Team | 0.17.89 |
| 42 | Matthew Simmonds (GBr) | 0.18.93 |
| 43 | Jared Graves (Aus) | 0.19.05 |
| 44 | Cesar Rojo (Spa) | 0.19.18 |
| 45 | Marco Milivinti (Ita) | 0.19.24 |
| 46 | Aari Barrett° (NZl) | 0.20.12 |
| 47 | Will Rischbieth (Aus) | 0.20.21 |
| 48 | Antoine Badouard (Fra) | 0.20.32 |
| 49 | Mitchell Delfs (Aus) | 0.20.59 |
| 50 | Mathieu Troquier (Fra) | 0.20.76 |
| 50 | Nico Vink (Bel) | |
| 52 | Kyle Strait (USA) | 0.20.81 |
| 53 | Bernard Kerr° (GBr) | 0.21.27 |
| 54 | Harry Heath° (GBr) | 0.21.30 |
| 55 | Boris Tetzlaff (Aut) | 0.21.65 |
| 56 | Benny Strasser (Ger) | 0.22.29 |
| 57 | Antonio Ferreiro Pajuelo (Spa) | 0.22.40 |
| 58 | Neil Donoghue (GBr) | 0.22.75 |
| 59 | Wyn Masters (NZl) | 0.22.83 |
| 60 | Robert Smith (GBr) | 0.23.14 |
| 61 | Mathieu Galleau (Fra) | 0.23.99 |
| 62 | Scott Laughland (Irl) | 0.24.05 |
| 63 | Cody Warren (USA) | 0.24.62 |
| 63 | Herman Olund (Swe) | |
| 65 | Marcel Beer (Swi) | 0.24.85 |

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| 66 Dominik Gspan (Swi) | 0.26.02 |
| 67 Cameron Cole (NZl) | 0.26.58 |
| 68 Ralph Jones (GBr) | 0.27.98 |
| 69 Arran Gannicott ^o (GBr) | 0.28.39 |
| 70 Elias Somvi (Ita) | 0.28.77 |
| 71 Andréa Gamenara ^o (Ita) | 0.31.50 |
| 72 Shaun O'connor ^o (Aus) | 0.36.23 |
| 73 Bryn Atkinson (Aus) | 0.41.17 |
| 74 Joe Barnes (GBr) | 0.47.64 |
| 75 Fabien Cousinie (Fra) | 2.54.73 |
| 76 Mickael Pascal (Fra) | 3.20.58 |
| DNF Damien Spagnolo (Fra) | |
| DNF Tom Deacon (GBr) | |
| DNF Markus Pekoll (Aut) | |
| DNF Nicolas Ortiz (Fra) | |
| DNF Matthew Scoles (NZl) | |
| DNF Ben Cathro (GBr) | |

Teams

| | |
|---|--------|
| 1 Santa Cruz Syndicate | 90 pts |
| 2 Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team | 54 |
| 3 GT Bicycles | 49 |
| 4 Scott 11 | 49 |
| 5 Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles | 47 |
| 6 Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz | 44 |
| 7 Trek World Racing | 44 |
| 8 MS Evil Racing | 42 |
| 9 Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense | 40 |
| 10 Suspension Center | 35 |
| 11 Morzine-Avoriaz 74 | 32 |
| 12 Animal Commencal | 30 |
| 13 Iron Horse-Kenda-Playbiker | 30 |
| 14 Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon | 21 |
| 15 Norco World Team | 19 |
| 16 Massi | 18 |
| 17 Subaru Mountain Bike Pro Team | 16 |
| 18 Team Vario Racing | 16 |
| 19 Duncan Riffle Racing | 12 |
| 20 2Stagefactory | 11 |
| 21 Ancillotti Doganaccia Racing Team | 6 |
| 22 Dytech DH | 4 |
| 23 Kona | 2 |