

MTB World Cup DH & 4X #3 - CDM

Vallnord, Andorra, May 15-17, 2009

May 17: Elite men downhill

Peat breaks record with World Cup win number 17

By Rob Jones – cyclingnews.com

It was a record-breaking weekend in Vallnord, Andorra, for round three of the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup. Steve Peat (Santa Cruz Syndicate) took his second consecutive win in the men's downhill and the 17th of his illustrious career, breaking Nicolas Vouilloz's record for most World Cup wins, and extending his lead in the overall standings.

Saturday's good weather carried over to Sunday for the downhill final. Sam Hill (Monster Energy/Specialized) qualified first, but that didn't mean much when it came to final. The drying track was getting loose and dusty at the top, and three days of hard riding was making the lower wooded portion rutted and full of braking bumps, pounding the riders as they pushed to shave extra tenths of a second from their times.

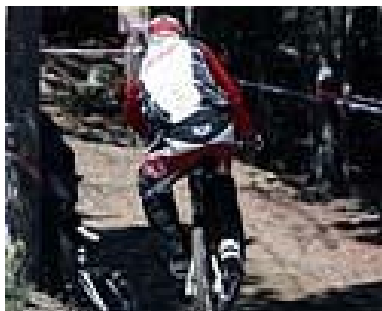
The men's final saw six lead changes in the first 60 riders, with American Ryan Condrashoff the first to take the time below 2:30. Condrashoff was eventually bumped by Australian Josh Button, who knocked two and a half seconds off the lead time, but was still slower than Hill's qualifying time.

American Cody Warren went faster than Hill's qualifying time by a few hundredths, but it was Australian Bryn Atkinson who was the first to go under 2:26 and set the first strong time. Atkinson's time would prove to be hard to beat, as rider after rider came close but could not budge him from the Hot Seat.

It took Michael "Mick" Hannah, 20 riders later, to finally knock Atkinson out of the lead. Hannah, who had been sick during the week, crashed during qualifying and started 17th from last. His run on the upper part of the course was strong, but it was in the rough and technical lower half where he really shone, making up 1.5 seconds in the final 400 metres to take the lead with a time of 2:23.71.



Elite men's downhill podium
Photo ©: Enric Moran Gimeno



Steve Peat (Santa Cruz Syndicate) races to a record-breaking win
Photo ©: Enric Moran Gimeno

"I've been sick most of the week, and had a big crash yesterday," said Hannah "but I had a good, smooth run, and I'm back on the podium, so it's good."

Brendan Fairclough (Monster Energy-Specialized), four riders later, came within 35-hundredths of a second of Hannah, and that proved to be the pattern for the next dozen riders - close to or ahead of Hannah at the top, but losing ground in the lower section. It wasn't until round one winner Greg Minnaar (Santa Cruz Syndicate) that Hannah was displaced, by a quarter of a second.

"I didn't crack the top as well as I wanted," said Minnaar. "And a couple of corners in the middle were a problem. It's good to be up there for points, but I think Steve's running away with it."

The field was down to three riders, with Peat the next up. The World Cup leader was even with Hannah through the upper sections, but really came into his own in the woods, knocking 1.41 seconds off the leading time. World champion Gee Atherton (Animal-Commencal), the defending champion in Andorra, was next, and came within an infinitesimal two-hundredths of Peat, but it just wasn't enough.

"I had a good run," said Atherton "but in a few places I was stalling and braking a bit. To lose by that small of an amount is pretty frustrating, I'm pretty pissed."

However, Hill was still to come, and he was everyone's favourite, after showing he was clearly in tune with this track, both in training and qualifying. The favouritism looked to be justified, when the Australian went through the upper portion 1.6 seconds faster than Peat, and enter the final sections two seconds ahead. But then disaster in the form of a crash in the woods, and Hill's chance for his first win of the year disappeared, while Peat saw his dream of a World Cup record realized.



Elite men's downhill podium
Photo ©: Team Animal Commencal

"It was really close," said Peat. "I didn't think I had the best time, I thought for sure that Sam would beat it. I had a couple of little bobbles and didn't think I was carrying speed. I needed a bit of luck, but you can see that he crashed, and that's it ... history being made."

Race Note

- It was just last year at this same Andorra World Cup venue when a different piece of history was written. That's when the Atherton siblings won three of the four gravity World Cups - each of the three taking a win. Gee Atherton won the men's downhill, Dan Atherton won the men's four cross, and sister Rachel Atherton won the women's downhill.

Results

1	Steve Peat (GBr)	Santa Cruz Syndicate	2.22.05
2	Gee Atherton (GBr)	Animal Commencal	0.00.02
3	Greg Minnaar (RSA)	Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.01.41
4	Michael Hannah (Aus)	GT Bicycles	0.01.66
5	Justin Leov (NZl)	Trek World Racing	0.01.88
6	Nick Beer (Swi)	Scott 11	0.01.95
7	Brendan Fairclough (GBr)	Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz	0.02.01
8	Bryn Atkinson (Aus)		0.03.21
9	Josh Bryceland (GBr)	Santa Cruz Syndicate	0.03.34
10	Steve Smith (Can)	MS Evil Racing	0.03.35
10	David Vazquez Lopez (Spa)	Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon	
12	Chris Kovarik (Aus)	Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	0.03.50
13	Dan Stanbridge (GBr)		0.03.67
14	Filip Polc (Svk)	MS Evil Racing	0.03.89
15	Samuel Blenkinsop (NZl)	Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team	0.03.91
16	Aaron Gwin (USA)	Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team	0.04.24
17	Cody Warren (USA)	Specialized Team America	0.04.26
18	Matti Lehikoinen (Fin)	MS Evil Racing	0.04.32
19	Bernat Guardia Pascual (Spa)	Massi	0.04.42
20	Robin Wallner (Swe)		0.04.54
21	Antoine Badouard (Fra)		0.04.61
22	Marc Beaumont (GBr)	GT Bicycles	0.04.69
23	Joshua Button (Aus)		0.04.88
24	Joris Bigoni (Fra)		0.05.04
25	Aurélien Giordanengo (Fra)		0.05.35
26	Andrew Neethling (RSA)	Trek World Racing	0.05.47
27	Mitchell Delfs (Aus)	Kenda Morewood	0.05.56
28	Thibaut Ruffin (Fra)		0.05.63
29	Fabien Pedemanaud (Fra)	Scott 11	0.05.66
30	Rémi Thirion (Fra)	Team Sunn	0.05.67
31	Samuel Hill (Aus)	Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz	0.05.84
32	Danny Hart° (GBr)	Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon	0.05.92
33	Joseph Smith (GBr)	Kona	0.06.16
34	Nathan Rankin (NZl)	Iron Horse-Kenda-Playbiker	0.06.19
35	Duncan Riffle (USA)	Duncan Riffle Racing	0.06.21
36	Ruaridh Cunningham (GBr)	Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	0.06.22
37	Joe Barnes (GBr)		0.06.32
38	Cesar Rojo (Spa)		0.06.40
39	Thomas Braithwaite (GBr)		0.06.49

40	Antonio Ferreiro Pajuelo (Spa) XMS-Devinci World Cup Team	0.06.56
41	Damien Spagnolo (Fra) Subaru Mountain Bike Pro Team	0.06.79
42	Kyle Strait (USA) Specialized Team America	0.06.80
42	Luke Strobels (USA) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	
44	Fabien Cousinie (Fra)	0.06.94
45	Romain Paulhan (Fra)	0.07.09
46	Jared Rando (Aus) Giant Mountain Bike Team	0.07.18
47	Kieran Bennett (NZl) X-Fusion-Intense	0.07.21
48	Ryan Condrashoff (USA) X-Fusion-Intense	0.07.22
49	Matthew Simmonds (GBr) Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	0.07.46
50	Cyrille Kurtz (Fra) Team Sunn	0.07.61
51	Benny Strasser (Ger)	0.07.75
52	Pierre Charles Georges (Fra) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.07.86
53	Ben Reid (Irl) Just Reid Race Team	0.08.25
54	Arnau Sugranes Mateu (Spa)	0.08.44
55	Tom Deacon (GBr) 2Stagefactory	0.08.84
56	Nicolas Ortiz (Fra)	0.09.29
57	Emanuel Pombo (Por)	0.09.56
58	Curtis Keene (USA)	0.09.84
59	Matej Charvat (Cze)	0.09.85
60	Markus Pekoll (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.09.99
61	Matthew Scoles (NZl)	0.10.13
62	Nathan Rennie (Aus) Kenda Morewood	0.10.29
63	Esteban Deronzier (Fra) Morzine-Avoriaz 74	0.10.48
64	Adam Brayton (GBr) Just Reid Race Team	0.10.50
65	Maxime Remy (Fra) Suspension Center	0.10.53
66	Bernard Kerr ^o (GBr)	0.10.89
67	Bradley Benedict (USA) Duncan Riffle Racing	0.11.05
68	Kim Petersson ^o (Swe)	0.11.32
69	Iago Garay Tamayo ^o (Spa)	0.11.41
70	Jorge Aguin Castro (Spa)	0.12.25
71	Markus Olkkonen (Fin)	0.12.37
72	Georg Sieder (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.12.49
73	Mickael Pascal (Fra) MSC Bikes	0.12.72
74	Arran Gannicott ^o (GBr)	0.12.81
75	Boris Tetzlaff (Aut) Solid Aclass Factory Team	0.13.64
76	Lorenzo Suding (Ita) Dytech DH	0.15.68
77	Rhys Willemse ^o (Aus)	0.23.94
DNF	Cameron Cole (NZl) Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	
DNF	Jared Graves (Aus) Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team	
DNS	Julien Camellini (Fra) Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	
DNS	Marco Bugnone (Ita) Argentina Bike Gravity Team	

Teams

1	Santa Cruz Syndicate	94 pts
2	Trek World Racing	65
3	MS Evil Racing	51
4	Scott 11	48
5	Team Maxxis-Rocky Mountain Bicycles	40
6	GT Bicycles	39
7	Suspension Center	35
8	Animal Commencal	35
9	Chain Reaction Cycles/Intense	33
10	Yeti Fox Shox Factory Race Team	31
11	Morzine-Avoriaz 74	30
12	Monster Energy / Specialized / Mad Catz	24
13	Iron Horse-Kenda-Playbiker	24
14	Norco World Team	22
15	Team Sunn	22
16	Lapierre Powered By Saab Salomon	21
17	Ancillotti Doganaccia Racing Team	17
18	Specialized Team America	14
19	Massi	12
20	2Stagefactory	12
21	Kenda Morewood	4