

DL#2: VARS, FRA – 16-17.6.2001

Dual World Cup Cancelled

For the first time in the UCI mountain bike world cup, organisers were forced to cancel a round of dual racing on Saturday, when severe weather threatened rider safety on the course in Vars, France.

According to a UCI statement, "The dual race was too dangerous with the lightning. So the safety team, the technical delegate and all the commissaires decided to cancel the second round of the Dual TISSOT UCI Mountain bike world cup."

The finals were scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, with qualifying one hour before. But when the unseasonable storm rolled through the steep Alps mountains in the South of France, there was nothing to do but cancel the dual portion of the weekend's events.

The first of two rainstorms broke out in the afternoon on Saturday, forcing organisers to postpone qualifying for one hour. But then, in the middle of the qualifying session - used to seed riders in the finals - a second and more severe storm began. Hail, rain and lightning strikes forced organisers to suspend, then cancel qualifying - along with the dual finals themselves.

While it was an unfortunate precedent to set in a decade's worth of UCI world cup mountain bike racing, rider safety is always of paramount importance, and the risk of a lightning strike was enough justification to cancel the dual finals. How the loss of this second round of racing will affect the overall season championship has yet to be determined, and an announcement by UCI officials will be forthcoming.

According to the UCI announcement, downhill racing will take place on Sunday. "The forecast seems to be great for Sunday. The downhill race will take place."