

# Mountain Bike World Championships – CM Val di Sole, Italy, June 17-22, 2008

**Elite women downhill finals** *By Sue George in Val di Sole, Italy*

## Atherton surprises defending champion

Rachael Atherton (Great Britain) put in a blazing run to upset defending World Champion Sabrina Jonnier (France) in the finals of the women's downhill at the World Championship. En route, splits showed her up by six seconds, and in the end she finished in 3'49"92, nearly 12 seconds faster than Jonnier.

"Everything was perfect!" said Atherton with a big smile after the finish. "I was like, whatever happens, happens and it went smooth. I just wanted to go under four minutes." In fact, she was the only woman to do so for the day. Atherton brought Great Britain its second gold medal of the day after Josh Bryceland won the earlier junior men's downhill.

Although denied the gold medal in the women's race, France took home the next three places. After Jonnier, it was Emmeline Ragot and Floriane Pugin. Mio Suemasa (Japan) rounded up the top five after setting an early best time of 4"11"68

Suemasa's best time endured until Pugin, the fourth from last racer, came through with 4'10"25.

Ragot, the next woman up, increased the pressure still further by clocking a 4'07'03. Then it was up to Jonnier upped the ante with a 4'01'25, but that wasn't enough to fend of the blazing Brit, who was the last woman of the day to do her run.

"There's no words. After you cross the line, it's confusing because you don't know if you've done it. Then I turned around and saw I'd gotten it. It was wicked," said the jubilant winner, who indicated that although she'd previously won junior worlds, nothing compared to her win this day in the senior ranks.

When asked about conditions, Atherton said, "I liked it more in the rain [earlier in the week], but when the sun came out, it was still ok. It was a quick track. You're down it before you know it."

Jonnier was in tears after her loss, and at the press conference after the race, the quiet French woman said, "Yes, I'm pretty upset. I'm sad today. I worked all year for this one race, and I finished second."

## Results

1 Rachel Atherton (Great Britain)	3.49.92 (54.02 km/h)
2 Sabrina Jonnier (France)	4.01.91
3 Emmeline Ragot (France)	4.07.03
4 Floriane Pugin (France)	4.10.25
5 Mio Suemasa (Japan)	4.11.68
6 Tracy Moseley (Great Britain)	4.12.30
7 Kathleen Pruitt (United States Of America)	4.19.66
8 Fionn Griffiths (Great Britain)	4.20.10
9 Scarlett Hagen (New Zealand)	4.20.14
10 Melissa Buhl (United States Of America)	4.20.38
11 Petra Bernhard (Austria)	4.34.31
12 Micayla Gatto (Canada)	4.36.08
13 Helene Valer Fruhwirth (Austria)	4.37.04
14 Claire Buchar (Canada)	4.37.42
15 Danice Uyesugi (Canada)	4.37.71
16 Amy Laird (New Zealand)	4.44.44
17 Diana Marggraff (Ecuador)	4.45.40
18 Elisa Canepa (Italy)	4.49.52
19 Vict Hernandez Molinas (Spain)	4.51.39
20 Kim Huard (Canada)	4.51.74
21 Katarina Tothova (Czech Republic)	5.58.91
22 Katarina Pialova (Slovakia)	6.07.15
23 Celine Gros (France)	6.16.49
24 Helena Boskova (Slovakia)	7.11.25
DNF Miriam Ruchti (Switzerland)	
DNF Emilie Siegenthaler (Switzerland)	