

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

Junior men cross country, 29.4km *By Sue George in Val di Sole, Italy*

Sagan wins junior world title

European champion Peter Sagan proved he's the best junior not only in Europe but in the world with his win on Thursday morning. The 18 year-old Slovakian won the junior world cross country title in Val di Sole, Italy, after a strong effort at the front of the race for much of the five lap race. He finished in 1:35:21. Behind him, Frenchman Arnaud Jouffroy finished on his own 1:34 later. Another 2:51 back was Switzerland's Matthias Rupp in third.

"This was my second cross county worlds. It was really hard for me," said newly crowned World Champion Sagan, a last year junior who resides in Zinint. Sagan's coach said the young rider races not only mountain bike, but also road and cyclo-cross. He added that Sagan rarely had the chance to race with other juniors and generally drew strength and support from his brother, a road racer.



Peter Sagan (Slovakia)
Photo ©: Rob Jones

Marcus Schulte-Luenzum and Jonas De Backer (Belgium) set the initial pace as they led the rest of the nearly record 119 racers at the start. They couldn't keep it up, however, and by the end of the first half lap, Jouffroy and Sagan were leading the race with a slight advantage over Rupp and Alexander Gehbauer (Austria).

By the end of the first lap, Gehbauer had traded places with Rupp, and he'd stay there until the end of the second lap when Rupp, who finished third in the European championship, moved back up into third place.

At the end of the second lap, eventual winner Sagan started to pull away from second place Jouffroy with about a 12 second gap. For the rest of the race, Sagan was on his own, riding strongly to increase his advantage, which ultimately ended up at 1:34. Rupp held on to third. At one point Rupp's gap off the leader was up over three minutes, but a speedy finish bought him back a few seconds to a slightly narrower margin (2:51).



Arnaud Jouffroy happy with silver
Photo ©: Rob Jones

"During the first part of the race, I tried to stay with the leader," said Jouffroy, who also races the road and cyclo-cross. "I came for victory, but I finished second and compliment the winner."

The race for fourth through sixth place was much closer with three riders sometimes changing places throughout the last few laps. When the dust settled, it was Fabian Strecker (Germany), Mirco Widmer (Switzerland) and Luca Braidot finishing in that order.

With their performance in the junior race, both Jouffroy and Rupp made their second podium appearance this week. They were part respectively of the winning and second place team relay squads from Tuesday's competition. Sagan's win came after eighth place finish at last year's junior worlds in Fort William, Scotland.

Results

1	Peter Sagan (Slovakia)	1.35.21	(18.48km/h)
2	Arnaud Jouffroy (France)	1.34	
3	Matthias Rupp (Switzerland)	2.51	
4	Fabian Strecker (Germany)	5.34	
5	Mirco Widmer (Switzerland)	5.42	
6	Luca Braidot (Italy)	5.43	
7	Henk Jaap Moorlag (Netherlands)	6.07	
8	Marcus Schulte-Luenzum (Germany)	6.15	
9	Matthias Stirnemann (Switzerland)	6.33	
10	Marek Konwa (Poland)	7.01	
11	Martin Gluth (Germany)	7.17	
12	Tim Wellens (Belgium)	9.37	
13	Micki Van Empel (Netherlands)	9.56	
14	Blaz Znidarsic (Slovenia)	10.55	
15	Anthony Grenet (France)	10.59	
16	Daniele Braidot (Italy)	11.01	
17	Jonas De Backer (Belgium)	11.17	
18	Nicholas Pettina (Italy)	11.41	
19	Ondrej Cink (Czech Republic)	11.44	
20	Zsolt Juhasz (Hungary)	11.56	
21	Arnaud Grand (Switzerland)	12.08	
22	Jan Nesvadba (Czech Republic)	12.14	
23	Robbie Squire (United States Of America)	12.25	
24	Simon Stiebjahn (Germany)	12.30	
25	Dirk Peters (New Zealand)		
26	Ricardo Paulo Marinheiro (Portugal)	12.31	
27	Thomas Decugis (France)	12.33	
28	Erik Groen (Netherlands)	13.01	
29	Matthias Hoi (Austria)		
30	Mykhaylo Batsutsa (Ukraine)	13.16	
31	Reto Indergand (Switzerland)	13.19	
32	Robbie Hucker (Australia)	13.25	
33	Elia Silvestri (Italy)	13.56	
34	Peter Braunsteins (Australia)	13.59	
35	Marcel Fleschhut (Germany)	14.21	
36	Olof Jonsson (Sweden)	14.34	
37	Andreas Gravdal (Norway)	14.42	
38	Adriaan Louw (South Africa)	14.46	
39	Hamish Creber (Great Britain)	15.01	
40	Donat Albin (Switzerland)	15.45	
41	George Bennett (New Zealand)		
42	Rourke Croeser (South Africa)	15.48	
43	Liam McGreevy (Ireland)	16.50	
44	Valentin Fiderer (Germany)	17.19	
45	Evan Guthrie (Canada)	17.26	
46	Amotz Nehoray (Israel)	17.48	

Behind one lap

47	Alex Paton (Great Britain)
48	Filippo Blanc (Italy)
49	Umbert Almenara Verges (Spain)
50	Sebastian Batchelor (Great Britain)
51	Pavel Pryadein (Russian Federation)
52	Ashley Hough (New Zealand)
53	Tyson Wagler (Canada)
54	David Miguel Costa Rodrigues (Portugal)
55	Kevin Santana (Argentina)
56	Benedikt Muendle (Liechtenstein)
57	Filip Adel (Czech Republic)

58 Attila Bela (Hungary)
59 Ruben Scheire (Belgium)
60 David Johnston (Australia)
61 Joris Bagnol (France)
62 Michael Pesse (Italy)
63 Charlton Durie (Australia)
64 Foronda Mauricio (Colombia)
65 Luke Fetch (Australia)
66 Rob Van Der Heijden (Netherlands)
67 Jonathan Boucher (Canada)
68 Michalis Kittis (Cyprus)

Behind two laps

69 Zoltan Bene (Hungary)
70 Manfred Reis (Germany)
71 Timofei Ivanov (Russian Federation)
72 Alexios Kokovikas (Greece)
73 Oscar Byhlinder (Sweden)
74 Diogo Beatriz Gome Afonso (Portugal)
75 Brazhnik Rodion (Ukraine)
76 Mario Rodriguez Bravo (Chile)
77 Keisuke Goda (Japan)
78 Richard Malinowsky (Brazil)
79 Francisco Lopez Pallares (Spain)
80 Juan Siles (Argentina)
81 Sagi Fainshtain (Israel)
82 Szymon Galczynski (Poland)
83 John Bennett (United States Of America)
84 Andras Szatmary (Hungary)
85 Kerry Werner (United States Of America)
86 Abdurrahman Dandal (Turkey)
87 Charalampos Takidis (Greece)
88 Stepan Stepanov (Russian Federation)
89 Neil Mc Gimpsey (Ireland)
90 Scott Green (New Zealand)
91 Klemen Nicoletti (Slovenia)
92 Seamus Powell (United States Of America)
93 Tomer Laks (Israel)
DNF Alexander Gehbauer (Austria)
DNF Jakub Magnusek (Czech Republic)
DNF Gerhard Kerschbaumer (Italy)
DNF German Dorhmann (Argentina)
DNF Paul O'reilly (Ireland)
DNF Balint Lukacs (Hungary)
DNF Aleksei Kuzmenko (Russian Federation)
DNF Vid Tancer (Slovenia)
DNF Kieran Hambrook (New Zealand)
DNS Joze Zagar (Slovenia)