

Chicago, IL - September 7th, 2009

World Championships

Emotion filled eyes and a clean sweep of the podium!

The mountain bike world was alive and well this past week in Canberra, Australia at the 2009 UCI World Championships. A strong contingent of Australians brought the fans flocking to the small hill for the action and story. With emotion filled eyes we watched as some long time "brides maids" finally became "brides" and a new hero stepped up to take over the relentless reign of Julien Absalon. With this, SRAM can revel in a complete sweep of the men's XC and DH podiums.

World Championships is a beast that hangs over a racer for the entire year. For some it's just qualifying and joining your countrymen for a world tour that brings the glory. For others it's an emotional roller coaster of frustration and anxiety. Steve Peat would ride this roller coaster his entire career coming so close, so many times. Over Peaty's long career he would place second four times and never get to touch the rainbow stripes. These World championships would mark the end of frustration and rocket Steve in to an emotional explosion.

The Canberra course was not really the typical World champs course we have all come to expect. Canberra is not known for the huge mountains but it still set the stage for the most exciting DH race in years. Mic Hannah was the first to throw his hands in the air with what looked like an unbeatable run. Earlier in the day Mic would say that Steve was the biggest threat and he was right. Steve would cross the line with a time faster by just 0.69 seconds. Peaty wasn't in the clear yet, Greg Minnaar would be the second last racer to start down the 2.1 km course. Greg is one of the strongest sprinters and Steve waited, as his teammate would show one second down at the split. Everyone waited and asked, Does Minnaar have the legs? We witnessed the smallest of margins with Greg coming in second by 0.05 seconds! What an amazing race! It's hard to describe the feeling that moved through the crowds but I think when you see a grown man tear up at the greatest accomplishment of his career, you can understand what's happening. Everyone at SRAM is so proud. Cheers Steve!

Equal to the drama and story of Steve's victory was the defeat of Julien Absalon. The current Olympic gold medalist has held the title of World champion six times and was determined to gain a seventh but Nino and Flo of the SCOTT-Swisspower team had other ideas and intentions. They would utilize a never seen team tactic of perfectly smart racing to gain the upper hand that resulted in the biggest win in the teams eight year history. A beautiful Australian day would set the stage for a punishing seven-lap race for the men. Seventy-five riders would take the start but eight riders would pull away and start the back and forth rally to the finish. With such a tight field up front it was hard to maintain the lead but we watched on as the soon to be podium of Schurter, Absalon battled the entire last lap. Schurter would make his move and lead into the last single track, blocking Absalon's attempt to lead. He would then push the pace to take the gold. SRAM XX would sweep the men's podium with Nino Schurter winning Gold, Julien Absalon grabbing silver and Florian Vogel taking home the Bronze.

The stories and Gold medals didn't stop with these two historic races. Caroline Buchanan would shock Jill Kintner with an amazing display of power to take the 4X gold. Burry Stander would also strike gold as our new men's U23 World champion and two of our favorite lady's would ride to the podium in the women's XC. Garyfisher's Willow Koerber would ride to her best finish, taking bronze and Lene Byberg would be so close to the rainbow stripes she could taste it. She would ride to silver.

For results or the pure entertainment of the BoXXer World championships please visit Vitalmtb.com!

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