

Press release 5th July 2008

UCI MTB Marathon World Championships in Niederdorf/Villabassa (Suedtirol/Alto Adige –Italy)

THE NORWEGIAN GUNN-RITA DAHLE WON THE UCI MTB MARATHON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS TITLE - FIRST WCH TITLE FOR ROEL PAULISSEN

Niederdorf/Villabassa (BZ), 5th July 2008 – Today the 35-year-old Olympic Champion Gunn-Rita Dahle won the UCI MTB Marathon World Championships title. Dahle did the 88,6 km (3040 vertical drop) in 4 hours 9 minutes and 56 seconds, preceding the second ranked Sabine Spitz (Germany) of one minute and 44 seconds. Late of 3'39", the Finnish Pia Sundstedt ranked third. Fourth the Swiss Esther Süss. Best „Azzura“ was the sixth ranked Elena Gaddoni with a delay of 16'34 sec. in comparison to the winner. In total Gunn-Rita Dahle has won eight World Championships titles (4 Cross Country WCH and 4 Marathons).

Roel Paulissen from Belgium is the new MTB Marathon World Champion in the men category. The fourth at the Olympics in Athens 2004 has been awarded the title in Niederdorf/Villabassa (Suedtirol/Alto Adige- Italy) after a decision by the UCI commissioner. After 120 km of length and 3,822 m of vertical drop Paulissen crashed with Christoph Sauser at the finish. The silver medal was awarded to the Swiss. Third was his fellow countrymen Urs Huber. From rank four to seven there follow Leonardo Paez (Columbia) and the Swiss Ralph Näf, Lukas Buchli as well as Thomas Frischknecht. Best Italian participant was eighth-ranked Johnny Cattaneo.

Results men:

1. Roel Paulissen (Belgium) 4:46.56,3
2. Cristoph Sauser (Switzerland) 4:46.56,3
3. Urs Huber (Switzerland) 4:51.56,8
4. Leonardo Paez (Columbia) 4:55.14,1
5. Ralph Näf (Switzerland) 4:56.10,8
6. Lukas Buchli (Switzerland) 4:57.27,7
7. Thomas Frischknecht (Switzerland) 4:58.54,9
8. Johnny Cattaneo (Italy) 5:00.33,8
9. Fredrik Kessiakoff (Sweden) 5:01.04,9
10. Sandro Späth (Switzerland) 5:02.16,2
12. Gilberto Simoni (Italy) 5:04.40,8
20. Hannes Pallhuber (Antholz/Anterselva-Suedtirol/Alto Adige-Italy)

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OK / OC Südtirol Dolomiti Superbike
von Kurz Platz 6 p.zza von Kurz
I-39039 Niederdorf / Villabassa
PIVA / MwSt.Nr. 01684240219



Results women:

1. Gunn-Rita Dahle (NOR) 4:09.56
2. Sabine Spitz (D) 4:11.40
3. Pia Sundstedt (FIN) 4:13.35
4. Esther Süss (SUI) 4:21.49
5. Erika Dicht (SUI) 4:23.31
6. Elena Gaddoni (ITA) 4:26.30
7. Anna Ferrari (ITA) 4:28.31
8. 8. Marielle Saner-Guinchard (SUI) 4:29.18
9. Antonia Wipfli (SUI) 4:31.38
10. Kathrin Schwing (D) 4:34.16

Quotes

Roel Paulissen: It is a strange feeling for both. None of us feels at ease. It would be nice if both of us could have won the World Championships title. We were both very strong today and we attacked correctly. For a long time the Columbian Leonardo Paez was with us, but he did not collaborate. So we started an attack and he did not react to it any longer.

Christoph Sauser: I simply sprinted and whenever I sprint I naturally move my handle bar. It is a pity that only one UCI commissioner takes the decision and not a jury of four or five people. On a road sprint a decision of this kind would not have happened. I am disappointed, because it feels rather strange to ride through the finishing line as first and then to be ranked second. This is the toughest race I ever took part at. We risked our lives twice: firstly on the descents and then on the final sprint.

Gunn-Rita Dahle: On the ascent to the "Rotwand" in Sexten/Sesto I was able to distance myself from my four contenders. Upwards onto the "Silvesteralm" my advance slightly decreased, however I was still able to get complete victory. Now I am going to go to Germany and from there I will fly directly to Canada where the next Cross Country World Cup takes place. From there the road leads directly to the Olympic Games in Peking. I did not expect this victory today. Mountain biking is my job and in any case I will keep on cycling until the Olympics 2012 in London.

Sabine Spitz: Unfortunately I did not test the course and this was surely a disadvantage. For this reason I had to lower my speed at the junctions and thus lost precious time. At the first ascent to the "Plätzwiese" there were still five of us. Unfortunately later I lost the alignment and so I rode alone for a long time. At the first Tech and Feed Zone Gunn-Rita Dahlen was already three minutes ahead. It was here in Niederdorf/Villabassa that I started with my real preparations for the Olympics.

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SHIMANO



Pia Sunstedt: The rhythm up to the "Rotwandhuetten" was simply too fast for me. At the Kreuzbergpass/Passo Monte Croce I was two minutes behind Dahle. Shortly after that I gained on Sabine Spitz. Then we rode on together while Sabine took on the leading position. On the "Silvesteralm" we were still confident to be able to catch up with Gunn-Rita Dahlen. Unfortunately I was not able to do so and on top of that I had a flat tire on the back just 1.5 kilometres before the finish. Now I will make holidays at home in Finland. As our country does not have enough UCI points, for me Olympia is out of question.

The programme for Sunday, 6th July:

8 to 8.20 am: start 14th Suedtirool Dolomiti Superbike (120 km – 56 km)

9 am: start Special Dolomiti Superbike (bike race for people with special needs)

approx. 11 am: award ceremony Special Dolomiti Superbike

4 pm: award ceremony Suedtirool Dolomiti Superbike

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