



ISSUE 6.0

ALICE

20 WHEELS...

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Photo Special
featuring
Darren Pokoj

Interviews
Steve Peat
The Panozzo Clan
Luke Strom

World
Champs

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2011 Worlds

clickt World Champs



pics :: BIKEPIX, MIKKELI GODFREE, CHRIS HERRON, ANDREW THRELFALL



[A]



[B]



[D]

TISSOT		TISSOT	
1	HILL Samuel	AUS	3:11.05
2	KOVARIK Chris	AUS	3:18.04
3	HANNAH Michael	FRA	3:19.24
4	GRACIA Cedric	FIN	3:20.78
5	LEHTIKOINEN Matti	GER	3:20.91
6	ATHERTON Gee	FRA	3:21.43
7	PASCAL Mickael	FRA	3:21.44
8	WENTHUB Andrew	USA	3:21.44

[F]



[E]



[C]

[A] Across the ditch to gold and glory.

[B] Amiel made the jump to seniors and to the bigger bike. 17th.

[C] K-Man rode like a man possessed in the top half, however he conceded over 6 seconds in the lower half of the course to Hill, finishing 7 seconds down in 5th.

[D] New Zealand's Nathan Rankin owned the larches section and represented on his 2 Stage like no other.

[E] Rennie getting some.

[F] What could have been? How long will it be before an all Aussie worlds podium?

The World Championships are best described as the Melbourne Cup of bike racing. There is always a favourite but at the same time there is no such thing as a sure bet. Horse racing has always been referred to as the sport of kings yet watching the Downhill and 4X events unfold whereby the elite competitors of our own kind are throwing themselves down courses that the mere mortal majority would barely walk down prove that Kings are long gone and we are well into a new era of sport and indeed spectating.

Watching the thousands of people screaming for each and every person that flew by renewed my original beliefs that the one thing about cycle racing is that no matter who is watching it, chances are that they too have ridden a bike. Which means most spectators, irrespective of their background or previous interest in cycling, can instantly appreciate the difficulty of competition based on their own experience from riding their own bicycle. I don't mean that they can grasp exactly how the riders do it, as it is quite clear from the huge number of sideline commentators that there are a lot of people out there that think they know how to ride a bike yet are evidently on the other side of the tape, but the majority of onlookers are equipped with a unique perspective simply from having ridden a bicycle and it translates to an incredible energy and appreciation when it comes to spectating.

"The crowd was awesome, they were just hanging out all over the track and making me go a bit faster."-Sam Hill

The winning ability of so many top pros makes backing a winner extremely hard and this is also one of the things I love most about a World Championship. The debating conversation with regard to the potential winner in the days leading up to the final five minutes is always full of so many perspectives and possibilities that all revolve around the fundamental reason for racing, to see who is the fastest.

"On the day of the World Championships everyone is on their game"-Nathan Rennie

A lot of riders dream about winning a World Championship, yet very few people's World Championship dreams come true.

"I feel pretty good. I wait for this for so long. It's like a dream."-Sabrina Jonnier

A lot more people talk about what it takes to win a World Championship and one thing that most riders and spectators alike bring up is the idea of the perfect run. I for one do not believe it exists. However, it is the pursuit of this perfect run that allows someone to ride towards a World Championship and maybe, just maybe, take the gold.

"I had a pretty flawless run."-Sam Hill

For the first time in 10 years the World Championships returned to the Southern Hemisphere. Over those ten years and from the very first World Championship won by H-Ball (Greg Herbold) in Vail '91, Australia has never won an Elite World Championship. Sam Hill went one better than his 3rd in 2004 to finish second in 2005

behind two time World Champion Fabien Barel. With Barel out of contention due to injury Hill was considered among many to be the favourite coming into Rotorua, yet from the flashes of brilliance he demonstrated in practice it was simply not enough to make Hill the pure and utter favourite. He was doing the runs but only taking risks periodically rather than throwing down countless suicide missions on the slippery and rooted Rotorua course. A class field made up of Minnaar, Rennie, Peat, Gracia, Atherton, Kovarik, Hannah, Rankin, Pascal, Neethling, Beaumont and more were all laying down tireless and consistent demonstrations that the World Championship wasn't going quietly with Minnaar and Peat being the standouts during practice. Interesting to note was the way Minnaar and Peat discussed lines during practice. The scene unfolded in front of me in a manner that symbolised a true respect held by the riders for each other as it wasn't about keeping secrets, it was about going faster.

[A]



Congratulations World Champion Sam Hill



photo :: Andrew Threlfall

[B]



[C]



[D]



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"I had a good run and I rode flat out"-Greg Minnaar

As if trying to pick a winner from practice wasn't hard enough. I can now safely say that picking a winner from qualifying is about as useless as slicks in the wet. (I was going to say spikes in the dry but that's what Fabien won on two years in a row!) Qualifying is perhaps the strangest thing that goes on at a World Championship. There is no timed practice at a World Champs meaning qualifying is the only real 'on paper' indicator of who's hot. Yet unlike the World Cup, there are no points associated with qualifying at a World Champs meaning that qualifying is merely used to seed competitors to ensure that they won't catch the rider in front. Here is where all types of mental tactics come into play when riders take to the track for what would more adequately be referred to as seeding, for all participants at a World Championships qualify for the final. Sam Hill stated that he specifically did not wish to qualify fastest based

on his defeat the previous year. He stayed true to this statement as he was seen rolling with his hands off the bars mid qualifier on his way to 6th. Initially Nathan Rennie seemed happy with his fastest qualifying time yet in hind sight he was somewhat contemplative about the pro's and con's of being the last rider down the course.

"Its hard to say really, I do perform well under pressure but being the World Championships and having a semi home crowd and having a lot of friends and family here there was a little bit of added pressure and I don't think anyone really wants to qualify fastest. I think I tried to rise to the occasion the best I could and treat it as any other race but there was definitely some extra pressure there."- Nathan Rennie

[A] Cameron Cole conquered the Junior World Championship in true underdog fashion. A crash from the favourite, Fairclough, and Blenkinsop could only watch as Cole's blistering run landed him gold. Nice Pond NZ!

[B] Neethling must have caught the big air disease from Minnaar.

[C] In his retirement race JK finished the highest of the Kiwi's in 21st.

[D] Sam Blenkinsop was still smiling despite two slips in his final run to silver in the juniors.

[A]



[B]



[C]



[D]



One word sums up the Rotorua 4X course from this year's World Championships and that word is massive. Despite missing silver medallist Jared Graves to injury, Australia on the whole was fielding its strongest ever 4X team made up of National Series Champ Luke Strom, Jared Rando, Ameil Cavalier and Alex Lloyd. The course that greeted them all the way from the road into town was the same massive course that claimed many of them both physically and mentally. In what has been described as a horrific crash by fellow team mate Katrina Miller, twenty year old Renee Junga broke the C1 and C2 bones in her neck and suffered spinal trauma at the T6 Vertebrae when she over jumped one of the many high speed doubles on the course. She also suffered two broken ribs, a fractured sternum and cracked teeth as a result of the crash. In the surgery following the crash her neck bones were fused together along with the insertion of a surgical rod and screws to stabilise her spine. The crash was enough to cause

Katrina Miller to withdraw from the champs, stating that it was not worth the risk associated with the race at such a late stage in her career. Wade Bootes was also smashed out of contention when he broke his nose and injured his shoulder in yet another crash.

Practice wasn't the only time for crashes although that is when the most serious of injuries were encountered. The racing certainly drew the crowd with an estimated 10,000 spectators fronting for the exhibition, which once the racing began, was all it appeared to be. The high speed nature of the course meant that passing was non-existent outside the first turn and I cannot honestly remember seeing a legitimate overtaking manoeuvre. Instead the only time the lead changed is when someone crashed someone else, ending both their chances and leaving the door wide open for the backmarker to take a clean run at the finish. It is meant to be racing after all, not gate starting. I do not wish

to detract from the achievements of the new world champions but it would be great to see someone fight for their gold medal past holding on to their position out of the gate. The best moment of my day was watching Jill Kintner getting all sorts of crazy down the main straight, way out in front and not faulting for a moment. What else can one say, the girl has skills.

Back to the Aussies and unfortunately we bombed in the opening round with a sole contender Alex Lloyd making it through to the quarter finals. By semi finals time we were all done, making way for the hard charging European contingent to duke it out against a lonely Lopes for a spot in the final. The Euro's were responsible in more ways than one for ejecting various competitors, but they had their sights set on Lopes, who missed the final for the first time in a long time. Subsequently Lopes added Marosi to his shit list and skipped the small final all together. The one thing about

[A] Cedric Gracia was born on a bike and subsequently moves as one with it.

[B] Prokop giving the transition some smack.

[C] Alex Lloyd got his first taste of World Championship 4X and managed to dismiss Cedric Gracia without too much trouble.

[D] Ameil practising some levitation techniques after a lonely crash.

click



[A] Lopes is he doesn't race for second place which is probably why he didn't stick around to have a go at getting fifth!

[B] Prokop landed back on top of the heap and in contrast to the word on the ground regarding the course, Prokop wrapped the course with "I love the speed and the size of the jumps, I'm so happy!"

[C] Prokop teaching Deldycke how to ride with your hands off the brakes.

[D] The swarm of bees stung quite a bit.

[E] Thanks for the Ti Bolts Monk.

[F] Rando going under the radar.

[G & H] Prokop & Kintner both with gold medal #2



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[A]



[B]



[D]



[F]



[C]



[E]

[A] Although he had the World Cups all wrapped up, Peaty was playing down how much he wanted to win the Champs as well.

[B] Bryn couldn't repeat his top ten performance from last year and ended up smoothing it to 13th.

[C] The bar s always with Steve.

[D] Sabrina didn't have Anne Caro in the way this year and she made sure that no one else got in the way of her Gold.

[E] Minnaar aligning his wheels with the tape.

[F] Lehikoinen was pinned all week and rode right into 8th

It would be amiss not to tell you about the crashes. And again this is what practice is for. Probably one of the biggest head games throughout practice would have to have been the rain on the Friday. Just because it is raining doesn't mean you can just have the day off, what if it rains in the finals? Riders need to be prepared no matter what and for some if not most this meant testing their lines from the dry days in the wet. The British looked as if they were praying for rain and despite Sam Hill having posted most of his major upsets in wet conditions he was not that keen on a wet final.

"I actually struggled a bit with this course being wet so I wasn't looking forward to it being wet. You've just gotta take it how it comes and I was happy that it was dry."-Sam Hill

Other than Sam Hill, Gee Atherton, Nathan Rankin and

a handful of others, I witnessed nearly every top rider either climb, jump or get ejected from their bike in the section of the course called "The Larches". You will no doubt see the carnage on film as most of the top videographers from around the world were all on hand for some of the wildest moments yet. To add even more to the mix this section is where huge numbers of spectators congregated each day, some equipped with BBQ gas bottle charged air horns!

The Larches descended a steep rooted section of the course made up entirely of exposed soil and wooden steps. This was the one place that bought even the best riders down to earth, literally. There were two entries to the Larches, that is until Sam Hill came along. A high or a low line divided by trees linked the top traverse entry to the next traverse down... Sam literally rode between the lines and gapped clear through the two dividing trees and onto the most rooted "unrideable"

section of the track before bouncing back onto the lower traverse. He was the only known rider to attempt, let alone land the line in the final run.

Peaty snapped a pedal toward the end of the Larches in practice and without realising that he had no outside foot his inside pedal dropped down and dragged him like an anchor into the bank. In typical Peaty style though he rode the bike to the ground without letting go of the bars! He then got up, still not realising his pedal was missing and rolled along the next traverse for which his remaining pedal was now useable as an outside foot. Finally exiting the Larches he was still trying to clip in before stopping and realising he was a few cans short of a 6 pack. Crazy stuff.

One rider to show their worth in the wet was South African, Andrew Neethling. This guy can ride no matter what and in the wet he looked amazing. Flamboyant

and smooth is a great combination and this is what he displayed all throughout practice, yet his dominance over the more adverse conditions was a standout.

The Rotorua course in comparison to Europe had more of a one line effect and was broken quite easily into sections. There was the odd drifting turn but for the most part the course bended down a worn race line. It was what the top riders did with this line that made all the difference. Sure there was the uncertainty of the Larches and indeed Sam's discovery of the infamous straight line but there was some pretty magical stuff going down elsewhere. Toward the bottom riders where blindly gapping over the landing ramps of the bridges, missing the braking marks left by the gravity challenged and touching down on the smoother transition of the race line, all with a bundle of added speed. Rennie narrowly escaped a rolling log in his final kicked out by some idiot with a bright idea? Small roots

became booters and transported riders over the bumps and into the next section and the slightest compression became an opportunity to pop the bike up and over the undulating grass hillside that rolled beneath the top section of the course.

The on course video coverage despite not looking all that wild did exactly what it was there to do, offer coverage. The big screen showed exactly how each rider was faring as the cameras panned across the more open sections of the course. Watching the re runs on TV3 the following afternoon it was evident that Sam Hill was not sitting down. He was out of the seat for the majority of his run and although he questions where his time over the other riders came from it seems apparent that he just pushed into every section.

"I am surprised at my winning margin, I thought the racing would be really close today and I don't really

know where I made up time on the other guys. I just tried to stay smooth and hold speed. There are a lot of spots where you have to hold speed on this track and as soon as I came out of a technical section I was trying to get on the pedals as fast as I could and pedal as hard as I could to the next section. I was focussed on what was coming up." Sam Hill - Worlds '06

Typically a world championship will come down to the tiniest of margins, with the crowd all staring at the time display to see it tick over to expose a new leader or to see a rider hang on to await their fate for yet another few minutes as the final riders come down. This year was different. Hills qualifying position saw him arrive well under Kovarik's hot seat holding time and the crowd was evidently on to the fact of how long it took a rider to make it out of the trees and down to the finish. All the nail biting was being done by Hill, the crowd seemed almost convinced that Hill had it won,

[A]



[B]



[C]



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despite their encouragement as each new contender came and went. Hill did not move until he sensed it himself as Rennie checked in to the final straight. I think relieved would be the most adequate of descriptions for Hills reaction as he is not really the emotional type to begin with, being more or less introverted other than his riding style, so it was great to see him smile knowing that he had claimed gold by a whopping 4.22 seconds over Minnaar and the rest of the best.

"I was pretty nervous at the finish as Rennie and Steve were close to my finals time in Qualifying. I knew I'd done a good run and done my best so I was just sitting there to see what happened." Sam Hill - '06 Worlds

[A] 2006 was a good year for Hannah. First World Cup on his new ride and he landed his first win. At the Champs he was sitting pretty for a medal until Hill, Minnaar and Rennie came down. But for all the seriousness of the race he still whipped it into next week during practice.

[B] South Africa definitely has one of the wildest skinsuits on the hill.

[C] Hill owned the 'Larches' section with momentum and control.



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[A]



5th

[B]



7th

[C]



9th

[D]



11th

[E]



26th

[H]



17th

[G]



32nd

[F]



27th

Junior Ranks

Over the last few years Australia has proved itself to be the strongest source of DH talent, and it is the continuing succession of World Champion juniors that has the rest of the world asking, "Why are they so fast?" With riders such as Rennie, Hannah, Cory, Hill and Cavalier all stepping up on to the World Championship podium at some point it leaves quite a legacy for the next batch of juniors.

The Aussie Juniors were definitely well armed with offshore racing experience and a solid Aussie season delivering them all into the hands of the Junior Representative Team. Whether or not there was added pressure to live up to Ameil Cavalier's championship winning result the Aussie contingent gave it to the Worlds Course in more ways than one. In terms of

overall success we again showed our depth of talent with 3 Aussies in the top 10, more than any other country. Despite not climbing on board the podium Maltman finished the highest with a wild run into 5th.

It all got a little too much for the favourites with Great Britain's Brendan Fairclough crashing out in the opening section of the course and New Zealand's pocket dynamo Sam Blenkinsop also ragging twice on his way down. Fairclough's crash seemed like nothing more than nerves whereas having seen Blenkinsop in practice I would go as far as 'a can of half-way' to say that he was probably going way too quick for his own good, the kid is loose. In the words of Gough Whitlam, 'Crash or crash through.'

[A] James Maltman letting go of the back end.

[B] Mitch Delfs' improved on his crashing ability and laid down a solid run to the line.

[C] Ben Bell in colour code mode.

[D] Alex Swann narrowly missing the Top 10.

[E] James Brodie running some pearly white gloves through their paces.

[F] Joel Bain on his way to the Napi San Challenge.

[G] Luke Gowen on the straight ad narrow.

[H] You couldn't help but feel the disappointment of Fairclough, yet if he is anything like Peat, he will be back.

1st Tracey Hannah

[A]



[A] Tracey on the way to gold.

[B] A World Cup Winning Ride, custom paint job and all.

[C] Not only was Tracey the 1st Junior Womens Champion Australia, she is also featured on the cover of Freewheel issue #30.

[B]



Age?

18.

Category?

I race Pro Women but I was a Junior at worlds.

Current Sponsors?

Edge Cycles, Orange and Utopia.

Time spent racing overseas this year?

About 6-7 weeks.

Profession?

McDonalds.

When you grow up you will be?

Spiderman.....! and hopefully a pro mountainbiker.

Current National Ranking?

1st.

Best ever result?

Probably North Carolina, cause it was my first race over here this year and it was my first NORBA win.

What is the best thing your bike does?

My bike goes fast.

How long have you had your current bike?

About 2-3 months.

Biggest crash on your current bike?

My forks suddenly lost rebound when I was going over a rock pretty fast and I got bounced off into a tree.

Coollest thing you've done on your current bike?

Ridden it.

Favourite part on your bike?

Pink Chris King head-set

Who works on your bike?

Rusty at Haro, Andre at Morewood and Cody Warren. It depends who feels like doing it.

The one part on your bike that you wish you could work on?

My shock and everything... I suck at it.

Who is your current training partner?

I have a few people that I ride with, it is mainly Miles Mead, Sean McCarrol and Mick.

[C]

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In The Pits

[A] Sabrina climbed off her usual pretty pink steed in favour of one of 8 custom painted World Championship gold Iron Horse Sundays. Luckily for her the presumption that a gold bike would equal a gold medal turned out to be true. After so many years coming second it was fitting that she won really.

[B] While the guys are doing every little thing to shed weight you can trust the girls to keep things looking pretty. Sabrina was so confident of a win she tolerated the extra weight of this flower valve cap. Awww, how sweet.

[C] Hannah is as Aussie as they come and to prove to the world that he a born and bred Aussie he had a custom paint job pledging his allegiance to the homeland. Aussie pride!

[D] Take a look at the rake on Kovarik's Travis forks. Hola!

[E] Lahar have been fooling around with these gearbox bikes for a while but thanks to NZ junior rider Cameron Cole, Lahar landed their first world championship and instant world wide curiosity. They don't come much stranger than a Lahar.

[F] The Lahar isn't just a carbon main frame, it also runs full carbon rear stays, carbon floating disc brake mount and carbon linkage. Infact about the only thing not carbon on the bike are the forks, cranks and brakes.

[G] Internal Gearbox 101. Don't even bother trying to workout where the chain goes.

[H] Press fit bearings go straight into the frame doing away with a conventional headset

[I] Cedric's Marzocchi 888 Air's with a matching slippery silver finish to his very trick looking Commencal.

[J] One very trick looking Commencal choc full of Marzocchi Rocco goodness.

[K] Patriotism NZ Style. Check out www.flamedandmaimed.com for some serious paintwork.

[L] SRAM's answer to Rennie's itchy trigger finger, a file.

[M] Up close and personal with 2 Stages shock configuration. Yes that's right two shocks in sequence equaling 9" of travel. The Kiwis certainly do things differently when it comes to designing DH bikes.

[N] 2 Stages split downtube with fork bumpers. Nice.

[O] Blackbox once again winning the aesthetic competition of the month. Trick as it gets.



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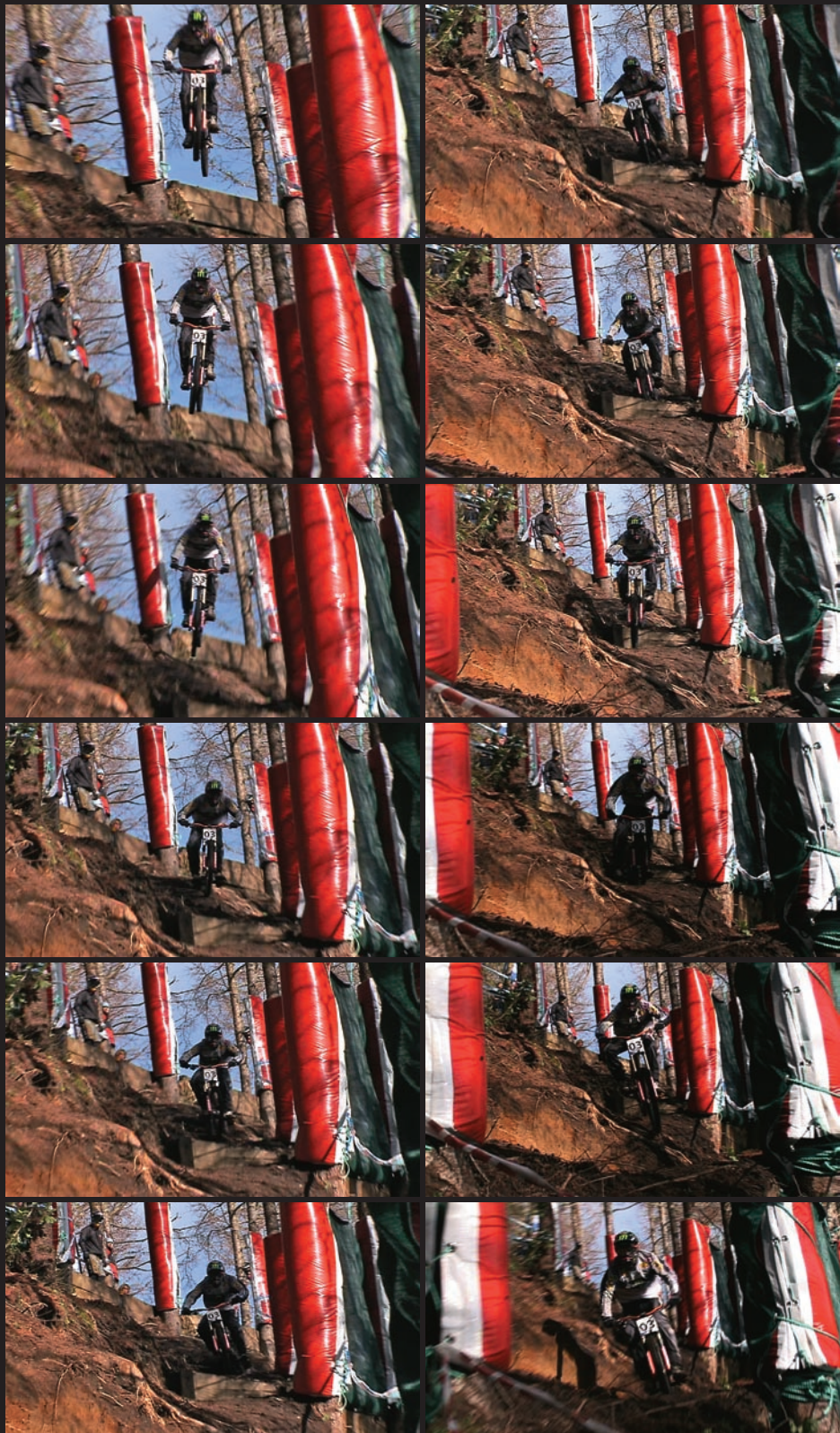
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PHOTO: COLIN MEAGHER



[A] This is a sequence taken from the upcoming Clict 2 DVD. Hill's solo line. The only other rider we saw hit this line was Justin Havukainen, but he didn't do it in his race run. It was a real make or break line because if you screwed it up you could kiss your entire race goodbye.

[B] Minnaar, Hill and Rennie taking time out to smell the roses. Hehe, nice outfit Rennie!

[C] Hill listening to some weird press guy ask him about spending time with his girlfriend. What the?

[D] Rennie putting his gear through its paces.

[E] The SRAM Boxxer Challenge showed that Australia might have the fastest racers but unfortunately our wrenches can't keep up. But Rennie has the goods even when it comes to mechanics.

clict

