

BY MARCUS RIETEMA

NEWTON'S PLAYGROUND



10th place qualifier Gregorio Cancio from the Philippines leading France's Olivier Bareaud. Photo: Melissa Ransom

The IGSA World Cup Series held its most important round of the 2009 season November 27-29 in Bathurst, Australia. Newton's Playground was chosen to be the 8th annual IGSA World Championships.

World Championship status ensured that nearly every top downhill skateboarder in the world was in attendance. Skaters from 16 countries were represented.

Martin Siegrist led the first day of Downhill Skateboard qualifying. The three-time World Champion from Switzerland set a time of 1:01.049, shattering Scoot Smith's year-old qualifying record of 1:04.168 by more than three seconds. Qualifying second was the winner of the recent IGSA U.S. Nationals, Andrew Chapman, followed in order by Mischo Erban, Scoot Smith and Kevin Reimer.

On the second day of qualifying, Siegrist completed a blistering run, lowering his day-old track record to 1:00.814 down the 1.3 km (.8 mi)



Defending Newton's Champion Erik Lundberg won the Consi to finish 5th. Photo: Bill Fonseca

course. Moving into second was current World Cup Series points leader Erban, with Smith qualifying third. Andrew Chapman seemingly came from nowhere to be a legitimate contender in Bathurst. After his strong performance on Friday, he crashed heavily on his second qualifying run. His Friday time still held up for him to start fourth.

Reimer qualified solidly in fifth and defending Bathurst champion Erik Lundberg wound up sixth. Both were serious threats to win Sunday's World Championship final. Gregorio Cancio from the Philippines impressed everyone to



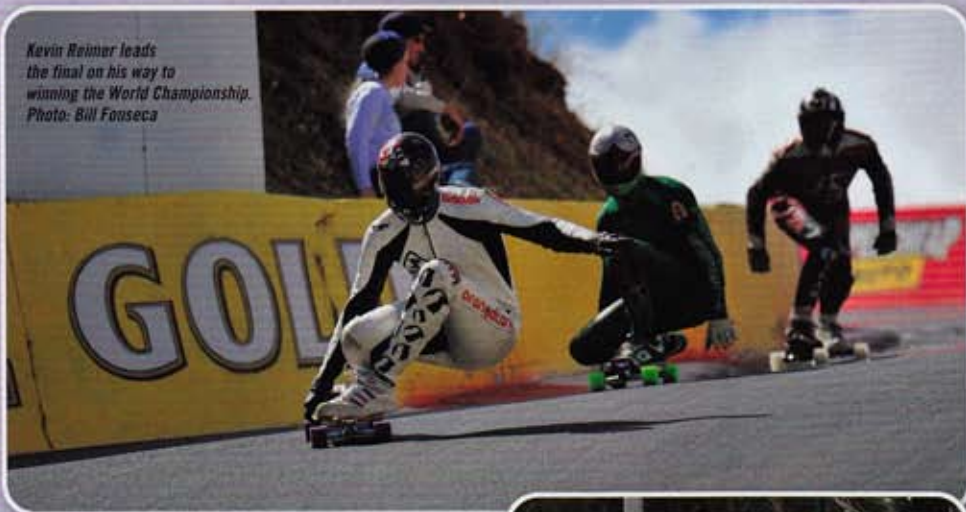
16-year-old Evren Ozan finished 7th and also won the Juniors World Championship. Photo: Melissa Ransom

Mount Panorama Raceway is most famous for its V-8 Supercar races, but since last year it has been turned into an epic venue for downhill skateboarding. The



Defending World Champion Scoot Smith rode solidly to 2nd place. Photo: Melissa Ransom

Kevin Reimer leads the final on his way to winning the World Championship. Photo: Bill Fonseca



qualify 10th in his first international race. Ninety-six skaters made qualifying attempts to make it into the 64-rider eliminations.

In the first round of heats all the top qualifiers advanced easily with the exception of Erban. In a huge upset, he crashed solo on the upper part of the course and was eliminated. In the second round, 2002 World Champion Yvon Labarthe was eliminated, as was Cancio. All the favorites made it through the round and into the quarters. Also making the cut was 16-year-old Evren Ozan, showing impressive poise under pressure.



The exit of "Forest's Elbow" created havoc all weekend. Photo: Melissa Ransom

lowed by Reimer, Chapman and Ozan. Siegrist was feeling the pressure and carried too much speed into the corner. He tried to scrub off some speed, but it was too late. On the exit he ran out of road and into the bales. Reimer and Chapman sailed by and into the finals.

The second semifinal featured Smith, Bareaud, Lundberg and Siddiqi. Lundberg had the lead entering Forest's Elbow, followed by Smith, Bareaud and Siddiqi. Exiting the corner Lundberg plowed into the bales and bounced back in front of Scoot. Somehow Scoot was able to avoid him and moved into the lead. Scoot and Bareaud raced to the line and to the finals.

A sensational final was set with Reimer, Chapman, Scoot and Bareaud. Reimer held nothing back and rocketed into the lead followed by Scoot. Chapman and Bareaud were third and fourth, respectively. Reimer and Scoot made it through the Elbow cleanly. The same could not be said for Chapman and Bareaud, however, who both went careening into the bales as they tried to keep up with the leaders. Scoot

tried in vain to catch Reimer's draft, but there was nothing he could do to catch the man they call "White Lightning." Reimer was crowned the 2009 IGSA World Champion. Chapman and Bareaud both scrambled for their boards, and Chapman crossed the finish line first to grab the final podium spot.

Scoot Smith's second-place finish coupled with Mischo's disastrous weekend moved Scoot into second place in points with one race remaining. Instead of Mischo going home as the 2009 IGSA World Cup Series Champion, he has now opened the door for Scoot. To win the Championship Scoot will need to win South Africa, and Mischo would need to finish third or worse. It's a long shot but certainly not impossible.

The Australian Skateboard Racing Association (ASRA) did a fantastic job organizing Newton's Playground. They came up with ingenious ways of creating their own five-camera live broadcast of the event, and also live timing and scoring via their website. Video footage of all the racing heats can be found at www.skateboardracing.org.au. Newton's Playground has raised the bar for a World Championship event and is quickly gaining legendary status. Everyone is looking forward to returning in 2010. ■

Newton's Playground/ IGSA World Championships Results

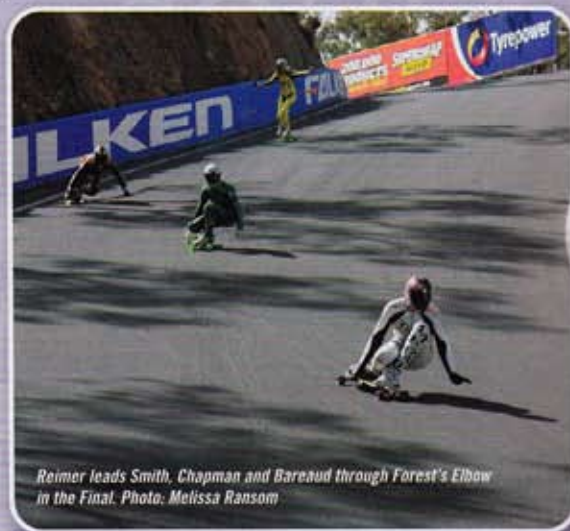
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|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Kevin Reimer | Canada |
| 2. Scoot Smith | Canada |
| 3. Andrew Chapman | Canada |
| 4. Olivier Bareaud | France |
| 5. Erik Lundberg | Sweden |
| 6. Martin Siegrist | Switzerland |
| 7. Evren Ozan | United States |
| 8. Georges Siddiqi | United States |

Andrew Chapman was a legitimate contender, ultimately finishing in 3rd. Photo: Bill Fonseca



The quarterfinals would determine the final eight. As expected, top eight qualifiers Siegrist, Smith, Chapman, Reimer, Lundberg and Olivier Bareaud all advanced to the Semis. The other two surprise semifinalists were Californians Ozan, who qualified 16th, and Georges Siddiqi, who had qualified 26th.

In the first semifinal it was Siegrist, Chapman, Reimer and Ozan. Heading into Forest's Elbow it was Siegrist in the lead fol-



Reimer leads Smith, Chapman and Bareaud through Forest's Elbow in the Final. Photo: Melissa Ransom