

Sport

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Ian Brown's Cycle Shop Mountain Bike Series: Guet victory for 14-year-old prospect

Teenager Culverwell claims his maiden expert success

MOUNTAIN BIKING

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SCHOOLBOY Sam Culverwell scored a brilliant breakthrough win on the Le Guet mountain biking course in the latest event of the Ian Brown's Cycle Shop Series.

The Guet offers the course setters plenty of scope to work with and no two courses are the same.

The riders were also thankful for a relatively dry course due to the pine trees giving good amount of shelter from the wind and the bed of pine needles ensuring the ground was dry and mud free.

The race duration for the Expert, Advanced, Junior and Veteran categories was set at one hour plus a lap and due to the relatively short course it was expected the leaders would cover about 12 laps of the winding and hilly course.

The leading group of three riders in the Expert category - Mike Serafin, Culverwell and Geoff Gibson - covered the first two laps in average pace 5min. per lap, but Gibson started to feel the effects of the high pace and started to fall back during lap three with Serafin and Culverwell pushing on together.

These two rode wheel to wheel for a further three laps with Culverwell matching Serafin's pace for the first half of the race.

However, all was to change during lap seven with Serafin having to make a pit stop to fix a technical problem with his bike.

Culverwell then increased the pace to register his fastest lap of the race and open a gap of 90sec. before Serafin was able to get back on his bike.

Culverwell continued to ride hard over the remaining six laps and extended his lead over Serafin to 3min. 45sec. by the end of the race.

Gibson rode in his normal aggressive manner to finish in third spot, just over five minutes down on the victor.

This was Culverwell's first victory in the Expert category and although James Roe was absent due to an injury, this was a great result for a 14-year-old and underlines his potential.

The riders in the Advanced category started one minute behind



Sam Culverwell in action at Le Guet.
(Picture by Nick Despres, 6865769)

the Experts, with Steve Dawes leading from the gun, a position he was not willing to give up.

He rode the entire race at the front with youngster Brad Vaudin hot on his heels to take second with Dan Thwaite taking third spot.

The Veterans race was as competitive as ever and was won by Mark Naftel by over a lap.

'I've tried to inject a bit more "fun" training over this winter away from pure triathlon/ironman preparation as I approach my 50th birthday in April and the MTB races run by the Velo Club are just that,' he said.

Having worked a night shift be-

fore the race, Naftel arrived for the event fairly late and had not had time to pre-ride the course before the race, so he shadowed Steve Smith for the first lap before moving past him at the end of the lap.

He then set about chasing down some of the Advanced riders who had set off a minute before the veteran riders.

Smith held onto second place and Paul Van Katwyk took third. In the Junior race, Jack Hoskins took the win with a superb show of skill and fitness.

Jack English was second and Ben Mills was third.

'The guys are getting faster

week by week,' said youth development officer Paul Brehaut.

The Under 12s, 14s, 16s, Ladies, Fun and Novice categories rode next, with Thierry Le Cheminant taking the U12s win from Jack Read in a fast race.

The girls mixed it with the lads all the way through their 40min. race, with Hannah Brehaut winning the U14 girls category.

She had the best start being third into the first corner and held onto fourth for that lap.

Megan Dowinton picked up her pace all through the race to win the Junior girls' category, with Heather Despres and Katie Halliday having a good battle taking

second and third respectively.

The U16 boys had a great battle with Miles Davy's training plan working to take top spot ahead of Josh Thornton, who had a real tussle with U14 winner Louis Le Cheminant.

Third in the under-16s was awarded to Josh Langmead, another ever improving youth.

Louis Le Cheminant won his U14 category in fine style, showing his handling skills and fitness.

Second was Tom Stables with Tom Stapley in third. Karina Bowie took the win in the women's race from Stephanie Price in second and Collette Mechem in third.