The world's fastest downhill racer

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After a brilliant win in Canberra in the season's penultimate event, Minnaar took a 116-point lead over Australia's Sam Hill into the final round of the series. Hill managed second overall in Austria but, with fifth place, Minnaar finished 61 points clear at the top of the final points' standings.

Gee Atherton finished in third, followed the Santa Cruz Syndicate teammates, Steve Peat and Greg Minnaar. South Africa's Andrew Neethling claimed tenth place.

After securing the world title, Minnaar commented: "All week there was obviously a lot of pressure on from being so close to winning the overall. It's not because of the race, as such, but because you are so close to winning it that you don't want to lose it.

"Sam (Hill) and I both had a lot of pressure on both of us and I think it affected both our riding. I don't feel I rode to my full potential.

"My race was hard. I started off really comfortable, I felt good and after just a little slip up top I decided to back things off a bit because I didn't want to risk a crash or anything else. I heard someone shout at me on the course that I was going slow. I was thinking a lot of stuff and I just didn't want to crash.

"I think from that aspect it was a pretty bad race, so at the bottom I wasn't really that stoked just because of the fact that I didn’t have a good race. It felt pretty bland and I also didn't have all the adrenaline pumping

from having a good ride, so it was mixed emotions at the bottom, even knowing that I had just won the overall."

Despite feeling little let down by his performance, Minnaar was ready to celebrate when he received a magnum of champagne on the podium and he had some teammates to share his success with; Minnaar's team, Santa Cruz Syndicate, finished top of the UCI team standings.

During the season, Minnaar recorded victories at Fort William in the UK, Mont-Saint-Anne in Canada, and Canberra in Australia. He also finished second at the World Championships at Val-di-Sole in Italy, third in Bromont, Canada, and fourth in Vallnord, Andorra.

Minnaar won the South African Downhill title in March in Pietermaritzburg. He hails from the KwaZulu-Natal capital, which will host the first leg of the Nissan UCI Mountain Bike World Cup from 2009.

Source: SouthAfrica.info
The all-in-one official guide
and web portal to South Africa.