



## 14th International "Marlene Südtirol Sunshine Race" C1 Nals/South Tyrol (Italy) - Manuel Fumic and Katrin Leumann triumph in Nals - XC Eliminator Raiffeisen Sprint goes to Engen and Federspiel - New participation record

*Nals (South Tyrol/Italy), April 6th 2013 - Manuel Fumic (D) and Katrin Leumann (CH) won the "14th Marlene Südtirol Sunshine Race" in Nals. The German Vice World Champion triumphed in vernal temperatures ahead of Marco Aurelio Fontana and Alexander Gehbauer from Austria. In the women's category, Katrin Leumann from Switzerland won for the first time ahead of Alexandra Engen from Sweden and MTB-legend Gunn-Rita Dahle from Norway. Eva Lechner, who is holding the current record in Nals with four victories placed fourth. Women had to complete 26.6 km and five rounds, and men 36.6 km and seven rounds. The race is part of the "Internazionali d'Italia Series". A new participant record has been set with 796 registrations from 26 nations.*

The men's race could not have been any more thrilling. Right after completion of the starting loop, a large group including Anton Cooper, Marco Aurelio Fontana, Karl Markt, Manuel Fumic, Andrea Tiberi, Alexander Gehbauer and Gerhard Kerschbaumer set a strong pace. The two Cannondale riders, Fontana and Fumic, along with Gerhard Kerschbaumer from Team Bianchi managed to build up a significant lead, which they expanded upon in the second and third rounds. In the round after that, Fontana attacked on the uphill finishing the 5-km-long circuit with a lead of 20 seconds ahead of Gerhard Kerschbaumer and 23 seconds ahead of Manuel Fumic. Fumic then attacked in the fifth round first overtaking Kerschbaumer and then also Fontana. Both Fontana and Kerschbaumer had to deal with a flat tire. While Fontana repaired it pretty swiftly, Kerschbaumer had to finish the downhill section to the Feed Zone before being able to attend to it. Fumic continued in strides, Fontana started to catch up and Gehbauer rode into third place with Kerschbaumer falling to sixth. Along with Tiberi and Markt, the trio tried to get close to Gehbauer. The Austrian had enough of a lead and energy left, to hold on to his third place all through the finish. Manuel Fumic completed the race with a final time of 1:38.04 hours. He distanced himself from Marco Aurelio Fontana by 40 seconds. Third place went to Alexander Gehbauer from Austria with a delay of 2.45 minutes. Gerhard Kerschbaumer from Italy placed fourth.

Four-time Swiss Champion **Katrin Leumann** won the women's race. This is her first victory in Nals. The 32-year-old from Riehen in the canton of the city of Basel (CH) sent the XC Eliminator World Champion Alexandra Engen from Sweden to the second place with a lead of 18.22 seconds. Three-times Nals winner Gunn-Rita Dahle crossed the finish line in third place, 46 seconds behind the winner and 27 seconds ahead of record holder Eva Lechner who was the one to set the rhythm from the start all the way through the fourth round. However, the race was decided in the last round. Leumann attacked, passed the two leading riders Lechner and Dahle and took off. Alexandra Engen pushed hard and caught up, too. She managed to pass Dahle and Lechner in the last downhill crossing the finish line as the second-fastest woman.

### **Engen and Federspiel won the XC Eliminator Raiffeisen Sprint**

On Saturday, April 5th, the spectacular XC Eliminator Raiffeisen Sprint took place in the center of the town of Nals. This race awarded important UCI points. The Silver and Gold World Champion from Austria Daniel Federspiel, won this event for the fifth time in a row. Second place went to Italian National Champion Elia Silvestri and third to Sepp Freiburghaus from Switzerland. A thrilling final in the women's race was dominated by the current World Champion and World Cup Overall winner Alexandra Engen from Sweden ahead of Eva Lechner (ITA) and Lisa Mitterbauer from Austria.



**The nations ranking** included athletes from ten countries. Italy is leading the charge with eleven victories, six for the women and five for the men. Norway, Germany and Switzerland are behind Italy with three victories each. A new participation record was set with 796 athletes from 26 nations registering for the 14th "Marlene Südtirol Sunshine Race". This year, 46 athletes more registered than last year. In terms of participating nations, the record matched the one set in 2008.

**The conditions were perfect** for this third race of the "Internazionali d'Italia Series". "We were very pleased with the new participation record" said OC Manager Florian Pallweber, adding: "The biggest challenge was managing the large number of participants and support crews. Athletes competed under best conditions, even considering that the track was probably a bit worked up by the end of the race but that in itself provided for an additional challenge."

Along with the events in Graz/Stattegg (AUT), Nove Mesto (CZE), Albstadt (GER), Lenzerheide (CH) and Oz en Oisans (FRA), the international cross country race in Nals is part of the **UCI Junior Series**, the mountain bike Europacup for Juniors and U23. This is also the ninth time that the event is part of the classic racing series "Internazionali d'Italia Series" and the third time that it is included in the Austrian mountain bike league, the only Italian event to do so.

#### **Rankings Men** (Results at [www.sunshineracers-nals.it](http://www.sunshineracers-nals.it))

1. Manuel Fumic (CANNONDALE FACTORY RACING) 1h38'04" ; 2. Marco Aurelio Fontana (CANNONDALE FACTORY RACING) 1h38'44"; 3. Alexander Gehbauer (I.IDRO DRAIN BIANCHI) 1h40'50" ; 4. Gerhard Kerschbaumer (I.IDRO DRAIN BIANCHI) 1h40'51"; 5. Andrea Tiberi (FRM FACTORY RACING TEAM ASD) 1h40'52"; 6. Karl Markt (OTZTAL SCOTT RACING TEAM) 1h40'56"; 7. Luca Braidot (GS FORESTALE ASD) 1h42'42"; 8. Johannes Schweiggl (SILMAX CANNONDALE REC.TEAM ASD) 1h42'51"; 9. Fabian Rabensteiner (FOCUS XC ITALY TEAM) 1h43'06"; 10. Anton Cooper CANNONDALE FACTORY RACING) 1h43'19"

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#### **Rankings Junior Boys**

1. Simon Andreassen (DANMARKS NATIONAL TEAM) 1h16'13"; 2. Luca Schwarzbauer (DEUTSCHE NATIONALMANNSCHAFT) 1h16'26"; 3. Hugo Pigeon (TEAM VELOROC LAPIERRE FRANCE) 1h16'44"; 4. Moreno Pellizzon (ASD UNIONE CICLISTI APRIVESI) 1h18'34"; 6. Alessandro Saravalle (BI&ESSE) 1h18'38".

#### **Rankings Women** (Results at [www.sunshineracers-nals.it](http://www.sunshineracers-nals.it))

1. Katrin Leumann (GHOST FACTORY RACING TEAM) 1h26'04"; 2. Alexandra Engen (GHOST FACTORY RACING TEAM) 1h26'22"; 3. Rita-Gunn Dahle (MULTIVAN MERIDA BIKING TEAM) 1h24'17"; 4. Eva Lechner (TEAM COLNAGO SUDTIROL) 1h26'51"; 5. Elisabeth Osl (GHOST FACTORY RACING TEAM) 1h27'08"; 6. Teresa Hurikova (SPECIALIZED RACING XC) 1h27'58"; 7. Lisa Rabensteiner (FOCUS XC ITALY TEAM) 1h28'58"; 8. Serena Calveti (TEAM CORRATEC-KEIT) 1h31'05".

#### **Rankings Junior Girls**

1. Greta Weithaler (ASV OTZI BIKE TEAM) 1h14'48"; 2. Barbora Prudkova (NUTRED SPECIALIZED RACING) 1h17'05"; 3. Isla Short (TEAM THOMSONS CYCLES) 1h17'48"; 4. Chiara Teocchi (I.IDRO DRAIN BIANCHI) 1h18'21".

#### **Statements Men:**

Manuel Fumic, winner: "Nobody is hiding one week before the World Cup kick-off. We were all on on the attack today and tried to play "our games". Fontana has done most of the leading work, but then he had to



deal with his flat. I could catch up with him and Kerschbaumer, and had more power to set things right in the last round. This surely boosts my self confidence at the beginning of the season. I'm in great shape."

Marco Aurelio Fontana, second: "I had a flat with 2 1/2 rounds to go and could not catch up with Manuel after that. But leading up to that point, I felt great and did a lot of the leading work. It was an important test with the World Cup starting in one week. It could have gone better, but I'm generally happy."

Alexander Gehbauer, third: "It was a very hard but great race with many spectators and a wonderful atmosphere. I completed the entire race on my own, which was very hard. Unfortunately, my team mate Kerschbaumer had a flat. I knew, that I was closely chased, but didn't risk anything in the last downhill as I had a large lead."

Gerhard Kerschbaumer, fourth: "I fell from third to sixth place due to my flat. Nevertheless, I realized that I am in great shape. My preparation is usually not so far ahead at the beginning of the season. The course suits me, but Nals seems to be cursed: third time fourth place. I'd be pleased if things stayed like this next week in South Africa."

#### **Statements Women:**

Katrin Leumann, winner: "I was able to catch up with the leading duo in the last round. I expected them to attack or prepare for the finishing sprint. But then I realized, that they didn't have it in them to race any faster. They let me push ahead, which gave me energy and motivation. I raced very carefully in the last downhill to make sure nothing bad happened."

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Alexandra Engen, second: "I simply wanted to ride a good race and gave it my all to follow through on my strategy. I realized at some point, that I am getting closer to the leading riders. That is when I pushed even harder, catching up on the last downhill. Luckily, I am a good sprinter."

Gunn-Rita Dahle, third: "We competed for every meter. I am pleased with my placing. I really needed this competition ahead of the World Cup kick-off. I lost little time on the downhill, but all uphill were very hard for me. A great race with many spectators. Katrin fully deserved to win here."

Eva Lechner, fourth and record holder: "I ran out of air at some point. I noticed, that I didn't have a lot of energy left, particularly in the last round. Nevertheless, I still hope to be ready for the World Cup next week."

#### **RANKINGS:**

<http://www.sunshineracers-nals.it/marlene-suedtirol-sunshine-race/ergebnisse.html>

#### **PHOTO:**

<http://www.sunshineracers-nals.it/fotogalerie/fotogalerie-2014/press.html>