

## Vejvoda wins head-to-head elite downhill race in Lithgow and local boy Joel Willis takes out U19's title



*The new home downhill track of the Central Tablelands Mountain Bike Club was inaugurated last weekend when 200 mountain bikers raced at the "Lithgow Pony Express" for Round 3 of the RedAss NSW/ACT Downhill State Series. After freezing training conditions with snow, wind and rain on Saturday, the sun came out for race day and Canberra's Joe Vejvoda took out the Elite Men's title. After a thrilling final run, Vejvoda now leads the series ex aequo with Central Coast's Jack Moir who finished second ahead of downhill "old-hand", Ben Cory. Local boy Joel Willis takes out the U19's title.*

The weather conditions were tough as riders from all over NSW and ACT started to arrive in Lithgow on Friday and Saturday for the RedAss Downhill State Round. Icy rain and the occasional snow flake couldn't keep the riders, however, from inspecting and riding the new downhill track of the hosting Central Tablelands MTB Club (CTMTB). The warm hospitality of the track's ground keepers of the Lithgow Pony Club made up for the cold weather as they looked after riders and their estimated more than 150 supporters with drum fires and hot foods and drinks.

### Vejvoda and Moir racing to series leadership at Lithgow

A slightly warmer race day started with practice runs in the morning and seeding runs for Elite and U19 categories. Local trail builder and elite racer Matt Walker had predicted a race time of "just under two minutes" and the fastest race time during seeding was clocked by Jack Moir, the young gun from the Central Coast with 1:47.75.

Joe Vejvoda (*image right*) from Canberra came in second during seeding and Ben Cory in third.



All three kept their top positions in the final runs and Jack Moir was almost two seconds faster in his final run, however, Joe Vejvoda was able to shave 3.5 seconds off Moir's seeding time and finished as the fastest elite rider with 1:44.25, establishing a first track record for the Pony Express.

"I had a clean run and kept it together all the way. I kept my speed pretty well on the high-speed straights up the top and tried to sprint aggressively into the technical sections", said Joe Vejvoda of his race run and how he was able to achieve that impressive gap to his opponents.

Vejvoda will head to Austria this week, where he will compete with the Australian U19's selection in the World Downhill Championships in Leogang near Salzburg. With that sort of racing experience under his belt and cross-training sessions on road and endurance mountain bike rides he further plans to ride the remaining rounds of the Redass Downhill state series, which he now leads on equal points with Jack Moir, taking the top positions off Game Mudd who will return from overseas for round 4.

### **Fastest girls in the state**

The female field was made up of multiple state and national champions with Australian Defence Force aircraft technician Sarah Booth, Vanessa Thompson and Joanne Fox (Penrith), who is also one of the strong series supporters with Cell Bikes.



*Fast girls (l-r): Sarah Booth, Vanessa Thompson, Joanne Fox.*

Sarah Booth recorded a respectable 2:20.88 in her final run, making up more than 19 seconds to her seeding run. Fastest in the first run, Vanessa Thompson, finished second in the finals with 2:23.14 and Joanne Fox in third, only a tenth of a second behind.

“We are really excited to have the girls racing the state series”, says organiser Juliane Wisata. “It’s invaluable to have such inspirational role models within the downhill community and we are lucky to have such ambassadors for the state series.”

Two up and coming female racers who will no doubt benefit from the experience and passion of the three elite women are Kellie Weinert from Kearns (NSW) and Charlotte Kerr from Balgownie (NSW). Both have shown incredible talent so far with Kellie leading the series ahead of Charlotte with three straight wins.



### **Lithgow local Joel Willis claims U19 title**

The biggest fields in Lithgow again were the U19's and U17's categories with more than 70 riders at the start line. In the U19's category, Lithgow local-rider Joel Willis (*image left*) clocked the fastest U19's time of the day with 1:50.19 in his final run on his new home track.

Willis now has moved up the series ladder to second place with Andrew Crimmins taking the lead. Andrew Crimmins (Bredbo, NSW) finished third in Lithgow collecting valuable points, just 0.10 seconds behind Conor Bullard (Hackett, ACT) who claimed the second place, his first podium finish in the series so far.

### **Maggs undefeated in U17's**

With an almost four second lead, David Maggs from Artarmon (NSW) raced to his third straight win at Lithgow with a race time of 1:54.53. Second was

Alec Reid from Wollongong (NSW) and a close third was Pat Hancock from Blackheath (NSW).

In the series, Newcastle's Tim Kmetyk and Josh Pollock from Wahroonga are close second and third with David Maggs leading with 255 points. The talented mountain biker is following in his father's footsteps, who himself was an acclaimed motor racer and is now coaching his son, very successfully it seems.



*David Maggs at the Lithgow Pony Express racing the Deubel 2UP bike to victory.*

Further support is provided from David Magg's main sponsor Deubel Bicycles. Not only is he racing an all-Australian hand-made bike, but David is also profiting from the racing experience of his bike's designer and creator, Sebastien Deubel. The French engineer is

an ex-pro mountain biker and category winner of the infamous Megavalance gravity endurance race in Europe.

“We spotted David's talent very early when I raced the RedAss Downhill state series myself in 2011”, says Sebastien Deubel of his protégé. “He is incredibly talented and his professional demeanour make him the ideal face of our company.” And with a cheeky grin he adds, “With our bike, David is ready for anything.”

And it's in this spirit that state series organiser Juliane Wisata says, the races are run and promoted. “We want our state series to be a stepping stone in the careers of our young riders. We can provide them with the industry exposure not only to media but also to potential sponsors.”

For round four of the RedAss NSW/ACT Downhill State Series, the racing circus will head to Canberra's Stromlo Forest Park on 15+16 September 2012. Competitors can register now at [www.rockytrailandentertainment.com](http://www.rockytrailandentertainment.com)

### **Top Results RedAss Downhill State Round 3**

Lithgow, 19 August 2012

#### **Elite Male**

1. Joe Vejvoda, Canberra (NSW)
2. Jack Moir, Morisset Park (NSW)
3. Ben Cory, Canberra (NSW)

Series leader: Joe Vejvoda, Canberra (NSW) = Jack Moir, Morisset Park (NSW)

#### **Elite Female**

1. Sarah Booth, Medowie (NSW)
2. Vanessa Thompson, Yanderra (NSW)
3. Joanne Fox, Penrith (NSW)

Series leader: Sarah Booth, Medowie (NSW)

#### **U19 Male**

1. Joel Willis, Lithgow (NSW)
2. Conor Bullard, Hackett (ACT)
3. Andrew Crimmins, Bredbo (NSW)

Series leader: Andrew Crimmins, Bredbo (NSW)

#### **U17 Male**

1. David Maggs, Artarmon (NSW)
2. Alec Reid, Wollongong (NSW)
3. Pat Hancock, Blackheath (NSW)

Series leader: David Maggs, Artarmon (NSW)

Please don't hesitate to contact us for high-res images, interviews and further information. For full race results, visit [www.rockytrailandentertainment.com](http://www.rockytrailandentertainment.com).



Lithgow club president Craig Flynn with (l-r) Joel Willis, Joe Vejvoda, Matt Walker, Al Bacci from RedAss Mexican Foods and organiser Juliane Wisata from Rocky Trail.

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