

## BRITISH MOUNTAIN BIKE SERIES ROUND 5



NEWNHAM PARK, PLYMOUTH

RACE REPORT BY CARLA HAINES



### ELITE FEMALE

The final round of the national series had come around so fast. I was excited, very nervous but a bit sad that it was the last event of the race season.

Looking at the start list there were 5 international riders so I knew it was going to be a very tough race...however it would give me a little bit of experience of the standard at World Cup events.

#### Friday

I rode over to Newnham, as I don't live very far, and pre rode the course. It was shorter than I expected, and quite hilly but I did like it. The ground was greasy in places but still dry, so decided to keep the Kenda Small Block 8 tyres on.

The team relay was on in the evening which I did for Shred race team. We just missed out on 3<sup>rd</sup> but it was really fun!

After that I went home, got my race kit and equipment ready then off to bed.

#### Saturday-Race Day

It was an earlyish start, 7am, for a good breakfast and pack the car. I was really nervous for this race, I wanted to do well as it was the last one of the series.

My preparation was great...everything was ready in good time so there was no last minute rush. I had a good warm up so I was fired up and ready to go.

We were called up for gridding 20 minutes before...I was number 16 so my number was nearer the end. Standing at the start line I was surrounded by some of the worlds best riders, in front of me was Gunn-Rita Dahle, the World Champion..it was amazing and so nerve racking!! I had such a mixture of feelings I didn't really know what to think...but just to focus and race how I normally race.

The whistle was blown and off like a rocket we all went. My start was ok at first until I got to the river crossing where I had to run with my bike. Some of the others rode through but a few didn't. At this point there was a gap between me, Gabby Day and the leading bunch. The short steep grass climb was near the start was really hard so I just kept going as hard as I could.

By the time I reached the very top of the climb the other riders had made a much bigger gap, but I could still see Day in my sights. My aim was to catch her up and work with her round the course.

My weakness is climbs which I really needed to work my socks off in the race. I was slowly gaining on Gabby and by the 2<sup>nd</sup> lap I had caught her. We worked together a bit but then I made a break from her. After that I didn't see her, so I my next target was to gain more time on the other riders and also not get lapped by the leader.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> lap I was starting to get a bit tired..and my mind was drifting a bit. To stop this from happening I tried descending differently. The sections I usually braked on I didn't and I went harder into the corners. This kept my mind switched on and started to get back into race mode.

On the final lap..I had realised I didn't get lapped by the leader which was good news...but I still had to keep my head in the race. The final descent I knew I wasn't very far from the finish so I went as hard as I could for the last flat section.

I was so tired and glad to finish. I had a good race and was quite pleased with my result. I ended up 12<sup>th</sup> and also got some more UCI points..which is step closer to racing at world cups.

I've had a really good season in my 1<sup>st</sup> year elite and I'm looking forward to next years racing already.