



## **MTBNZ Dh Series R5 Final- 19th & 20th February 2022**

Nelson welcomed riders from around the country at the weekend for the 5th and final round of the National Downhill series, raced on the Classic 1.4km Downhill course Kaka.

The well groomed and well taped trail had had some major volunteer work done leading up to the event after the recent storm that hit Nelson the weekend prior. Thanks to all who got it to the high standard that was raced on.

Saturday saw Junior riders U15,17, open (17-29), and masters take to national standard, Mltre10MegaNelson sponsored, taped Kaka, with hero-dirt conditions. With practice runs in the morning, and seeding and race runs in the afternoon, riders were loving the sun and every aspect of the trial, including some epic taped unique race lines.

Local legend Loui Harvey came through the tape in seeding with a little more in the tank for a successful race run, taking overall fastest run of the day with a 3:12.05, and a first in Masters 1 and with late entrant, Nelson powerhouse, Jason Hylkeman in second. With Nelson riders on the top spots on 4 from 9 categories it was an epic day for the region. Super grom Lucas Malham took 1st in the U15, with the machine Nico Shroder in 3rd. Experienced rider Jack Gale took first in the Open men after a long hiatus away from the steps, multi disciplined Michell Aebi took 1st in Masters 1 Woman.

After a huge downfall overnight on the Saturday, the trail was a lot different, for the U19 categories, and Elite Riders.

After the first few practice runs riders were getting used to the ever changing conditions. With the sun coming out for seeding a strong Nelson field of riders all finished in the top 5 in all categories apart from the U19 F where we didnt have any representatives. With the limits being pushed in race run the field started to drop, keeping the team from Peak safety and club medics busy. With everyone safely off the hill the times came through and mens elite, pro riders Sam Blenkinsop, George Brannigan, and up and coming, Tuhoto-Ariki Pene taking 1,2 and 3 closely followed by Nelson's Kieran Bennett.

In the women's elite field 4 of the 6 riders were from Nelson, EWS star Rae Morrison set a quickest time in seeding on her trail bike, but dropped in a close 3rd in her race run after a small mistake, Lou Kelly with a 4th after a huge off that she luckily walked away from, 5th was temporary local British freerider Marha Gill, and in 6th was the woman that never stops Emma Bateup. On the top step was Queenstown's Louise Ferguson.

In the U19 field newly signed Join the Union Lochie Stevens-Mcnab from Rotavegas took the top step, and Nelson consistent podium rider Seth Buckley took 3rd.

The event was slick, well organised and Kaka was riding so good, the music and DJ were on point all weekend, the safety was top notch, the spot prizes were amazing, the images that have come

from the event were super professional, the bike mechanic support was essential and the food left everyone full and happy, so a MASSIVE thanks to all the volunteers and to these rad folk at: Ngati Koata (for gear & land access) Tasman Pine, Aimex apparel, Peak Safety Nelson Ltd, Nelson City Council, The Rock 94.4fm, MTF Finance, Apex Car Rentals, Gravity Nelson, The Gorge, Nelson Regional development agency, Mitre 10 Mega Nelson, Fresh Choice Richmond, Cable Bay Adventure Park, Village Cycles, Henry Jaine Photography, Kiran Taylor Photography, [Nelson Suspension / Nelson Cycle Tech](#), Leva Mini Cranes Nelson Ltd, Gravity Nelson, Shot Coffee Nelson, Rage Audio, Dan the Mc man, MTBNZ.  
Photo Credit: Kiran Taylor.