

Back when he was racing for YETI, I caught up with Sam Blenkinsop.

- 1) - So Sam Blenkinsop, You live in New Zealand, Race Downhill and are the new signing for Yeti Cycles, Tell us a little about yourself and what makes you tick?

Laid back, easy going Kiwi that loves riding anything with two wheels, but mainly DH. Proud member of the Yeti/Fox Shox Factory Team.

- 2) - It must be good to be on the same team as Justin Leov, a fellow New Zealand native?

Yeah, we're good mates and I have always been impressed by what he's done on the World Cup. We hung out a bit last year on the circuit, always good to hear a familiar accent.

- 3)- Was choosing Yeti as your team for the next 2 years an easy one to make?

I've always imagined being part of a big team with backing from a bike company, and I've always liked the Yeti 303...so when the chance came up to ride for them, and to be with riders who I could learn from, it was a pretty easy decision to make.

- 4) - You rode Turner bikes last year, and got 22nd overall in the world cup, and a 9th at the senior Worlds, how do you think 07 went for you overall?

I was feeling the pressure that I wasn't a junior anymore and I had to step up a bit; I would qualify and do well in those runs, usually top ten, but then in the race I would just poop out and get 20th and stuff like that. I think I was just trying to push it too much. I did feel I had to prove myself last year, and I do think my riding is getting better, just bit by bit – trying to stay on the bike, pick better lines, and train more.

- 5) - Can you tell us a little bit about how you got started in Downhill racing? What was your first bike?

I started riding when I was 12 years old. All my mates were riding so I wanted to give it a go. I started to ride skate park and then dirt jumps. The following year I got a downhill bike, started racing and it's all sort of taken off from there. When I was just starting out riding I met a guy from New Plymouth, Wyn Masters, and I started riding with him and then I started jumping and going to races and stuff. He was a big influence on me, along with Glen Sisarich. The sponsorship and international racing came a couple of years later.

- 6) - As well as the World Cup and World Champs, what other races/series are you racing in?

I'll be racing more in the US than I ever have before. It's not fully worked out yet, but some NORBA's, Crankworx which should be sick as, and maybe some Mountain States Cup races.

- 7)- Where are your favorite places to ride?

Schladming is a pretty sick track, and in Rotorua I really like the national track, as well as most of the tracks down south in NZ.

- 8) - What interests outside of Mountain biking do you have?

Lately I've been messing around on pit bikes, and I race vintage motocross.

9) - Which other Mountain Bikers do you admire?

That other Sam....Hill. And Kiwi legend John Kirkcaldie.

10)- Any sponsors or friends you would like to mention?

Thanks to my current co-sponsors, adidas eyewear who are new with me this year, and OGK Helmets, also new for me in 08. FiveTen shoes, and IMPACT Designs. Also to the team's main sponsors like Fox Shox and Shimano, and a big thanks to Matt at Wide Open for all the help up until now, and my Mum and Dad for every thing they have done for me.