



PHOTO: JON HUEY

Downhill skateboarding and the International Gravity Sports Association (IGSA) World Cup Series grew tremendously in 2007. Great new events were added to the schedule, the competitive ranks swelled, and the caliber of racing reached an unprecedented level.

The Series ran from July to December, spanning three continents and seven different countries. It became a four-way battle between Mischo Erban from Canada, Martin Siegrist from Switzerland, Erik Lundberg from Sweden and Noah Sakamoto from the United States. Never before had four legitimate contenders traveled around the world to vie for the World Cup.



Noah Sakamoto in blue and Martin Siegrist in red surprised everyone with a tie in the Rock & Roll World Cup. Top photo: During practice at the Maryhill Festival of Speed, Scott (Scoot) Smith leads Billy Meiners on the left and the white lightnings Kevin Reimer and Erik Lundberg on the right.

Under the IGSA point system, only a racer's four best finishes count toward overall placement for the year. This keeps the championship from going to the racer who simply attends the most events. The result was an incredibly tight points battle that wasn't settled until the final race of the year.

ALMABTRIEB WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Jungholz, Germany
July 11-14

Each year the IGSA designates a single event to determine the World Champion. Jungholz was chosen for 2007 because the track tests all of a skater's skills. It was a great event that foreshadowed the most competitive season in downhill skateboarding's history.

In practice, Noah Sakamoto amazed everyone by speeding through the technical bottom section faster than anyone else. He finished a very respectable tenth. In his first-ever European race, Mischo Erban earned a spot in the final showdown that also included two-time World Champion Martin Siegrist, German veteran Bassi Haller, and Jo Babilot from France. It was a tough battle fraught with controversy, but in the end Siegrist earned his third World Championship.



IGSA Almbtrieb World Championship Podium. Left to right: Second place Mischo Erban, first place Martin Siegrist and third place Bassi Haller.

Final Results

1. Martin Siegrist (SUI)
2. Mischo Erban (CAN)
3. Bassi Haller (GER)
4. Jo Babilot (FRA)
5. Erik Lundberg (SWE)

ALPSPEED DOWNHILL

Thun, Switzerland
July 18-22



Left to Right: The Alpspeed Downhill 2nd place finisher, Erik Lundberg, gives support to the winner, Mischo Erban. Closely behind followed Tom Edstrand and then Douglas Silva.

The following week, the World Cup Series moved to Switzerland for the Alpspeed Downhill. The track was wide open with only a few technical corners, so drafting skills were at a premium. Mischo Erban dominated to earn his first World Cup victory. Following in second place was the young Swedish skater Erik Lundberg, who finished fifth in Jungholz and now found himself on the podium as a legitimate title contender. Third place went to 2005 IGSA World Cup Champion Thomas Edstrand from Canada, who showed that he can still make a run for the podium despite no longer racing the full circuit.

Final Results

1. Mischo Erban (CAN)
2. Erik Lundberg (SWE)
3. Thomas Edstrand (CAN)
4. Douglas Silva (BRA)
5. Bassi Haller (GER)

ROCK & ROLL WORLD CUP

Thalgau, Austria

July 23-26

Thalgau is best described as a series of high-speed straights connected by sweeping 180-degree corners. Mischo Erban dominated practice, qualifying and the elimination rounds – until he threw it all away during the semi-finals. He held a commanding lead but pushed too hard and crashed solo. The finals surprised many with Martin Siegrist, Noah Sakamoto, Douglas Silva and veteran Stephan Risch. It ended up as the closest finish in IGSA history. Even after extensive review of both photos and video, a clear winner could not be determined. So the race was declared a tie between Sakamoto and Siegrist. Silva was third and Risch a very stoked fourth.



From left to right: Noah Sakamoto and Martin Siegrist tie for first in the Rock & Roll World Cup while Douglas Silva came in third and a super stoked Stephan Risch came in 4th.

Final Results

1. Noah Sakamoto (USA)
2. Martin Siegrist (SUI)
3. Douglas Silva (BRA)
4. Stephan Risch (GER)
5. Mischo Erban (CAN)

PASKAPOO DOWNHILL RODEO

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

August 11-12

In an effort to strengthen the presence of the World Cup Series in North America, the IGSA negotiated to let the Paskapoo organizers award World Cup points for their event. The race was held in eight-man heats on the access road to the luge/bobsled track at Calgary Olympic Park. In the end it was an all-Canadian podium, with Nicolas Desmarais in first followed by Max Erwin and Kevin Reimer. The organizers never supplied the IGSA with complete results, so unfortunately proper points could not be awarded.

Final Results

1. Nicolas Desmarais (CAN)
2. Max Erwin (CAN)
3. Kevin Reimer (CAN)
4. Hugh Johnston (CAN)
5. Noah Sakamoto (USA)

GOFAST SPEED DAYS

Eastbourne, England

September 1-2

The GoFast Speed Days were held in the seaside town of Eastbourne, near the famed white cliffs of Dover. It was a late addition to the schedule, and many international racers did not attend because the Maryhill race loomed just ten days ahead. It was still an incredible event that featured exciting racing among many of the elite European-based competitors. Erik Lundberg finally took his first World Cup victory after a tough battle with Luis Lins and Bassi Haller, who finished second and third respectively.

Final Results

1. Erik Lundberg (SWE)
2. Luis Lins (BRA)
3. Bassi Haller (GER)
4. Nicholas Lescali (FRA)
5. Jo Babilot (FRA)

EX DRINKS MARYHILL FESTIVAL OF SPEED

Goldendale, Washington, USA

September 11-15

In the past, the big European events dominated the World Cup Series. Races in the U.S. were small, poorly attended, and didn't offer much away from the track. The Maryhill Festival of Speed changed everything and set a new international standard. Held on the famed 2.5-mile Maryhill Historic Loops Road, the event featured five days of riding, live bands, parties, movie premieres, autograph sessions, a campground with a skatepark, and much more. Martin Siegrist shocked the locals by qualifying first. The race itself was probably the toughest in history. When the dust settled, Canadian "Scoot" Smith played the spoiler and took his first-ever victory. Joining him on the all-Canadian podium were Mischo Erban and Kevin Reimer.

Final Results

1. Scott "Scoot" Smith (CAN)
2. Mischo Erban (CAN)
3. Kevin Reimer (CAN)
4. Martin Siegrist (SUI)
5. Nathan Lang (CAN)

HOT HEELS AFRICA

Kogelburg, South Africa

December 14-16

The season standings came down to the final event in Kogelburg, a nature preserve near Cape Town that is famous for the baboons that play in the hay alongside the course! Going into the race, Erban held a slim points lead over Siegrist and Lundberg. All three had a mathematical chance of winning the World Cup Series.

Siegrist is enrolled as an engineering student and couldn't make the trip, so it all came down to Erban and Lundberg. Lundberg

needed the race of his life – a victory or, if Mischo didn't win, no less than second place. In qualifying, Scoot Smith earned the number one spot, with Lundberg in second and Mischo back in fifth.

The skaters battled through three elimination rounds to determine the final four: Lundberg, Erban, Smith and South African Mike Zietsman. It was a wild heat with Mischo going down, Zietsman nearly going down once, and Scoot nearly going down twice! The only guy to skate cleanly through the whole heat was Lundberg. He scored the victory and with it earned the 2007 World Cup Series title.

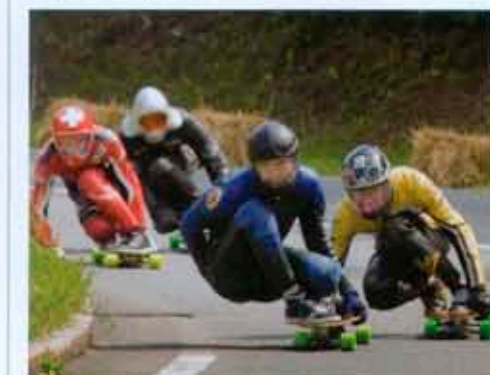
FINAL STANDINGS

There have been close battles for previous World Cup Series Championships, but the level of competition was never higher than in 2007. Erik Lundberg fought tenaciously to take the Series title from Erban, who also had an amazing year. Siegrist had an incredible season, too, winning his third IGSA World Championship.

2008 promises to be even better. On March 7-9, the IGSA will hold its first-ever World Cup race in Australia.

The future looks very bright for downhill skateboarding and the IGSA World Cup Series. The sport is growing, the caliber of races keeps rising, and more top skaters are finding sponsorship to travel internationally for World Cup events.

For more information on the IGSA World Cup Series, please visit www.IGSA.tv



Noah Sakamoto, during the semi-finals, leads a pack at the Rock & Roll World Cup. On the far left is Martin Siegrist, who placed 3rd in the 2007 World Cup series.

2007 Final standings:

1. Erik Lundberg Sweden 1742.50 pts
2. Mischo Erban Canada 1732.08 pts
3. Martin Siegrist Switzerland 1714.07 pts
4. Noah Sakamoto United States 1666.61 pts
5. "Scoot" Smith Canada 1576.22 pts
6. Jonathan Martinez France 1496.92 pts
7. Sebastian Tournissac France 1476.24 pts
8. Luis Lins Brazil 1457.42 pts
9. Stefan Rüfli Switzerland 1452.95 pts
10. Juliano Cassemiro Brazil 1449.68 pts