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## North American Dirt Report

### Off-road riders challenge European dominance at the 2002 world championships

*By Mary Catherine O'Connor*

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Cycling is to Europe what basketball is to the U.S., so it's no surprise that Europeans rule mountain biking. But a few North Americans could leave the competition in the dirt at the world championships, Aug. 28-Sept. 1, in cross-country, downhill and mountain cross, in which four riders descend the same course at the same time.

#### **Tara Llanes, 25**

**Los Angeles, mountain cross; 2001 world championship bronze medalist, 2000 silver medalist.**

**On medaling:** "The bronze was a sweeter victory. We were on U.S. soil and it was so soon after 9/11."



**On pedaling:** "Maxim asked me to wear a see-through top for a photo. I said, 'I've trained my ass off for cycling. I'm not wearing this.'"

Mountain biker Missy Glove poses on a kid's bike  
Silvia Otte

**Chrissy Redden, 36,**

**Hamilton, Ont., cross-country; won first World Cup in 2001, 2000 Olympian.**

**On winning:** "Last year when I won my first World Cup, it was a big breakthrough. I'd been on the podium, but I never won. It was always a mental block for me."

**On women's racing:** "There used to be only a handful of other women, now there are 20-30 in each category."

**Missy Giove, 30,**

**New York City, downhill; two-time overall World Cup champion, three-time national champion.**

**On coming back from brain hemorrhage and torn rotator cuff from 2001**

**crash:** "I'm riding better than ever." What that means: "North American women are tough. It's more acceptable for us to have bruises and broken bones than it is for Europeans."

**Alison Dunlap, 32,**

**Denver, cross-country; 2001 world champion, five-time national cyclo-cross champion, two-time Olympian in both mountain and road biking.**

**Competitive edge:** "I ride with men in local and regional races. If it's a road race, I'll do the men's race and then the women's; if it's mountain bike, I'll just do the men's."

**Marla Streb, 37,**

**Baltimore, downhill; 2001 Sea Otter Classic gold medalist, 2000 world championship bronze medalist.**

**Why downhill:** "I prefer cross-country, but my first year as a pro I took a VO2 max test, and my coach said, 'At least you can be a downhiller.'"

**On pain:** "I took third in a race with my broken ankle taped to my pedal. It was pure pain."

**Alison Sydor, 35,**

**Edmonton, Alberta, cross-country; three-time world champion, three-time World Cup overall winner, two-time Olympian.**

**On age:** "I never guessed that I'd still be racing at this point. Cross-country is an endurance sport, and getting older doesn't take you out of the running. It's hard to not think about Athens in 2004."

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