

# Vincent Leygonie wins inaugural BMX Freestyle SA Champs

The inaugural BMX Freestyle South African Champions were crowned this past Saturday at the 2023 Park Lines BMX Tournament - a Cycling South Africa and UCI sanctioned event, presented by LW Mag and Dragon Energy Drink in association with Dickies, Garmin, GoPro, Leatt and Mongoose Bikes. Vincent Leygonie put on an impressive display of skill and determination to claim the overall title.



Vincent Leygonie. Photo by Eric Palmer

The tournament took place at the Stoneridge Skatepark in Edenvale, Johannesburg, providing a platform with a variety of obstacle and line choices for the competing riders to make use of and showcase their skills through the qualifying rounds and into the finals.

Over 50 riders competed within the Amateur and Pro divisions as judges took use-of-park, amplitude, execution, trick variation and difficulty into account when scoring riders' runs. The qualifying pro riders competed for their share of the R37,500 prize money, Garmin Instinct 2 Solar smartwatches, along with other prizes. The winner of the Amateur division took home a new Mongoose BMX. The Best Trick competition closed off the day with the winner walking away with a GoPro HERO11 MINI.

## Amateur Finals

The Amateur division saw a host of new riders competing in this year's event, adding to the development and growth of the sport in South Africa. Eight riders qualified into the closely fought finals.

- Duan Stapelberg's run consisting of a Suicide No-Hander, 360 Can-Can and Tuck No-Hander saw him score another Park Lines Podium in 3rd place.
- Mathys Putter combined a host of tricks - Tailwhips, Barspins, No Handers and a 360 X-Up - with good flow through the park to finish in 2nd place.
- Dylan Lamb, who finished in 3rd place last year, showcased his progression with technical riding throughout the park.

His run, including 360's both ways and a big Backflip over the hip, secured the top spot of the podium.



Dylan Larb. Photo by Eric Palmer

### **Pro Finals – South African Championships**

A stacked field of top riders from all over the country competed for their chance to qualify into the 12 rider final where official SA ranking and valuable UCI points were awarded.

Jenna Byrnes, the only female rider competing in the Pro Ladies category, again showcased her skill throughout the park with incredible bike control and tricks like a 360, Superman and Can-Can to be crowned South African Champion.

### **Pro Mens category**

- Doran Mathewson put on a show for the fans with his fast riding style and huge airs throughout the park. That, mixed with Backflips, 360's, Supermans and Tailwhips, put him into 5th place overall.
- Malcolm Peters is always a podium contender and was in the mix again this year with dailed tricks like his Double Tailwhip, Flair Invert, 270 Can-Can and 360 Turndown, but it was only enough for 4th place.
- Dylan van Belkum has progressed through every contest he has entered, and it paid off this year as he slotted into 3rd place with an impressive run that included a Backflip Barspin, Tuck No-Hander, Backflip over the hip, a Flair and a 270 Backflip.
- Defending Park Lines champ, Murray Loubser produced a technical filled run making use of the whole park while throwing in a Tailwhip, an opposite Tailwhip, a Double Truckdriver, a Flair over the Hip, a 360 Nose Manual and a 360 Lookback to take the second step of the podium.
- In his final run, Vincent Leygonie took to the course with speed and style throwing a huge Superman Tailwhip over the big box jump, big airs in the bowl, a corked Backflip, a Tailwhip and a Barspin to Barspin back on the quarter pipe. His run impressed the judges the most as he was awarded the overall win and crowned the Pro Men South African Champion.



Photo by Eric Palmer

Park Lines organiser, Ryan van der Spuy says, “This is a big step forward for the sport in South Africa, to have an officially sanctioned event where riders are now recognised through the commission and awarded official UCI points and South African ranking.”

“This would not be possible without our Park Lines event partners, most notably Dickies who helped with the process, going as far as covering the costs of all the riders’ membership and licence fees.”

“Finally to all the riders that competed in the event, thank you! This event is for you and you all represented yourself and the sport in an impeccable manner. We cannot wait to see, and be a part of, the growth and development of this awesome sport in the future.”

In conclusion, Koketso Kganyago, Dickies Brand Manager added: “As Dickies South Africa, we are very proud to partner with Park lines, not only for this event but for the future as well. There are exciting developments in the sport of Freestyle BMX in the country and we couldn’t be prouder to be a part of this journey from its inception. We look forward to helping develop and grow the sport in a real way.”

“The Dickies Brand is deep rooted in our fabric and we are passionate about moving the needle forward through authenticity, honesty, hardworking creativity. We are driven by excellence that motivates and provides real opportunities to the public at large.”

“Our involvement with the SA Champs does not end with just the event itself but extends to leaving lasting benefits for the riders at the this tournament beyond the championships.”

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