

THRILL OF VICTORY

AGONY OF DEFEAT

Cartagena, Colombia hosted this year's Pre-Worlds meet with a concluding WIC marathon at the end of the event. It was a great chance to test the new Atom FLY Crossover and BITE ME wheels on both track and road venues, which yielded some incredible results which had everyone talking. The road portion was very fast with a vast amount of people sporting the new Atom ONE road wheels. The competition level at this meet every year is through the roof on account of the Colombian skaters having to compete in numerous National Championships throughout the year to qualify for World Team Trials. I was able to squeeze into the final and come out with the 'W' in the 500m, thanks to the incredible roll of the Atom ONE (mix of orange hub and black hub). The Track portion was interesting for me because it was the first true test of what our new track line could do, I was not let down. They came up with an expo 500m relay race that really displayed some speeds I haven't seen at any meet but worlds. The race consisted of 2 teams of 2 people each, racing head to head; they started doing about 300m and the finisher getting the relay and completing the final 200m at an "all-out" pace. Team Luigino/Atom-Colombia's Pedro Causil displayed his unparalleled speed, mixing the FLY Crossover with the BITE ME for an ultimate grip-roll combo, bringing home the gold for his team. In the girls' race, Team Luigino/Atom-Colombia's Jercy Puello proved it was no fluke that these new wheels are the fastest urethanes the track had ever seen, bringing home the gold for her team in the 500m relay.

The final day held the first WIC race of the season, a stroll around the castle of Cartagena. Half of the course followed the edge of the ocean, with a slightly less-than-stellar surface for inline skating. The other half was a very smooth, wind-free path all the way around to the finish; each lap was about 4.2k. The pack started with over 100 skaters, as the junior and senior men were combined. There was very little action off the front of the pack for the first few laps, then came the attacks. Eventually a decent sized break of about 9 or so skaters succeeded in getting away from the pack. I was not part of this, but felt as if this was THE break to be on, so I kicked it into chase mode and pulled myself back to them. The initial laps of the break were very fast and a true test of endurance as the sun beat down on our heads and the road rattled our eyes on the front stretch. Coming around to the final lap, I told Max to follow me. No one really made any attempts to get away from the pack, until the final stretch where Jorge Cifuentes made a dash on the far side of the road. I was leading the pack and matched his speed until we reached my sprint marker and made our move for the win. I was able to lead Presti in for a 1-2 punch, while proving that Atom Wheels are tools, not toys. Presti and I both had a combination of FLY Crossover and orange hub ONEs. Yes, the FLY Crossover lives up to its name as being a track wheel that breaks the barrier and crosses over into competitive road racing as well.

