

## Sierra Nevada- ESP- 8-9.8.98- DH#6

### Sunn-Un Riders Make Their Move

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*Sunn-Un*, the mighty racing team which luxuriates in its logo and uniform sitting atop the podium of many a downhill race, celebrated two more wins, this time in the mountains of southern Spain. Significantly, with only two rounds remaining in the 1998 World Cup, **Anne-Caroline Chausson** (FRA, *Sunn-Un*) and **Nicolas Vouilloz** (FRA, *Sunn-Un*) moved into their respective series leads.

The fast, dry course was dubbed “*the equalizer*.” A mixture of rocks and dust, its groove was, like the riders' descent, a fine line down the desert mountain. The course continued to degrade over the weekend as hundreds of pro riders took as many practice runs as possible - each time looking for the perfect line on this improbably technical track. By Sunday's qualifying and final runs, the track had braking bumps so deep that shocks had to be stiffened up to prevent losing a wheel in the soft, dusty holes. With only one good line down its rocky face, the track demanded high speeds but made little room for interpretation... and none for mistakes. Pure technique determined Sunday's top finishers as riders spent approximately five minutes at high speed in total concentration.

Women started racing at 1pm. The top 25 qualifiers hoped for late season points and a shot at the podium. In a rare result, a perfect duplication in the top five between semi-final and final run results occurred. Chausson qualified fastest, followed by **Leigh Donovan** (USA, *Mongoose*), **Marla Streb** (USA, *Yeti*), **Mercedes Gonzales** (ESP, *GT*) and **Nolven LeCaer** (FRA, *GT*). As the final event unfolded, each woman of the top five simply bested the previous run, and so the podium was determined.

Chausson is gunning for her first world cup title after three seasons as runner-up. **Missy Giove** (USA, *Volvo-Cannondale*) flatted out in the semi-final, and it is looks increasingly likely that the French phenom will achieve the one title which has so far eluded her.

**“I'm very happy to win here. The world cup is important to me, but I'd like to win both the WC and World Championship,”** commented Chausson, with her matter-of-fact immodesty. Another familiar theme came up with the quote: *“Now I am tired and need to be quiet for the rest of the season to win the Worlds.”* History has shown that Chausson attains her best results after complaining of fatigue. With quotes like these, she could be in for a brilliant late season. Today she was efficient, beating Donovan by less than one second. Chausson commented that: *“It was a difficult race and very fast. To win you must let off the brake and go. It's difficult to achieve a large margin on a course like this. Now I must do well in Kaprun and get a top five in Japan to maybe win the World Cup.”*

Second placed Donovan was pleased with her result, especially since the World Cup is no longer her goal. *“I rode well, so I'm happy. I'm out of the world cup points race, so the US championships are my priority.”*

With another 50 points for her win, Chausson has a perfect record - four wins - for the season since discarding her Nevegal result. Although Giove is second, she is still 55 points behind Chausson - a nearly impossible gap to bridge.

Men's racing took on a decidedly different tone here, with France and Spain taking the six fastest qualifying spots. After a brief lead by early starter **Myles Rockwell** (USA, *Volvo-Cannondale*), mid-fielder, **Scott Sharples** (AUS, *Trek Volkswagen*) held the top spot for the next 25 runs. Then with nine rides to go, Spaniard **Pau Misser** (*Yeti*) took over the lead to huge cheers.

Only one of these men bested Misser's time: second-fastest qualifier Vouilloz. World Cup number-one, **David Vazquez** (ESP, *Volvo-Cannondale*) had qualified third fastest and was the local favorite, but he cracked under the pressure, while his compatriot and teammate **Oscar Saiz** was slowed by mechanical problems. A good, but not great day for the Spaniards. Top qualifier **Cédric Gracia** (FRA,

*Sunn-Un*) also showed a lack of the consistency that makes his teammate Vouilloz the world's best downhiller.

With his win here today, Vouilloz was proclaimed to be the most prolific winner in world cup downhill history. There was a touch of mere formality about this proclamation, because everybody has known for years that Vouilloz is clearly the best. After being doused with champagne by fellow podium finishers, Vouilloz was awarded the orange leader's jersey. He explained his success both today and this season in general.

*"All the track was one line, so I rode very well," he said. "No mistakes, and I was confident. I'm happy to win. My first priority is the World Cup and World Championships, so after bad races in Les Gets and in the U.S. I got some motivation. But the worlds are my top priority."*

For Misser, second place couldn't have come at a better time. *"This is my best finish ever, and to win it here at home is very special,"* he said.

In the overall standings, Vouilloz is now 11 points clear of Vazquez, before the two low scores are thrown out, so the men's race is still a close one. Cédric Gracia (FRA, Sunn- Un) lies third overall, 44 points back.

*By Ari Cheren*

<i>place</i>	<i>bib</i>	<i>UCIcode</i>	<i>name/nom</i>	<i>nat</i>	<i>team</i>	<i>t1</i>	<i>time</i>	<i>t'+</i>
1	2	FRA197602	<b>VOUILLOZ</b> Nicolas	FRA	SUNN	2:53.56	4:31.83	
2	22	ESP197608	<b>MISSER Pau</b>	ESP	YETI	2:57.83	4:37.31	5.48
3	13	AUS196710	<b>SHARPLES</b> Scott	AUS	TREK/VOLKSWAGEN	2:58.23	4:37.72	5.88
4	7	FRA197910	PASCAL Mickael	FRA	SUNN	2:59.87	4:40.46	8.63
5	35	USA197208	ROCKWELL Myles	USA	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	2:58.22	4:40.64	8.81
6	4	FRA197803	GRACIA Cédric	FRA	SUNN	3:00.67	4:41.15	9.31
7	1	ESP197902	VAZQUEZ David	ESP	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	3:00.22	4:41.33	9.5
8	6	GBR197406	PEAT Steve	GBR	TEAM GT	2:59.46	4:42.16	10.32
9	41	FRA197307	JANY Stéphane	FRA	GT FRANCE	2:58.72	4:42.19	10.36
10	15	NED196804	DE BEVER Bas	NED	BE-ONE	3:00.53	4:42.29	10.46
11	10	USA197109	LOPES Brian	USA	MONGOOSE	3:02.15	4:42.48	10.65
12	29	GBR197009	WARNER Robert	GBR	GIANT	3:02.37	4:42.61	10.77
13	103	SWE197610	ERIKSSON Kristian	SWE		2:59.35	4:42.63	10.8
14	11	USA197405	VOREIS Kirt	USA	MT DEW/SPECIALIZ	3:01.79	4:43.45	11.62
15	27	FRA197502	BALAUD Alexandre	FRA	SCOTT INTL	3:00.63	4:43.46	11.62
16	12	FRA197008	TAILLEFER Christian	FRA	PEUGEOT PALAISEA	3:00.56	4:44.11	12.27
17	17	ITA196606	HERIN Corrado	ITA	SINTESI VERLICCHI	3:00.83	4:44.89	13.06
18	5	GER197708	KLAUSMANN Marcus	GER	BE-ONE	3:01.83	4:45.04	13.2
19	19	FRA197501	AMOUR Karim	FRA	GT FRANCE	2:58.83	4:45.18	13.34
20	3	SWE197708	ENGSTRÖM Johan	SWE	SCOTT INTL	3:02.97	4:45.60	13.76
21	30	USA196911	PURDY Jeremy	USA	GIANT	3:03.28	4:45.81	13.97
22	32	FRA197802	GARDELLA Maxime	FRA	SINTESI VERLICCHI	3:05.26	4:46.16	14.32
23	50	FRA197702	BALAUD William	FRA	GT FRANCE	3:03.89	4:46.99	15.15
24	25	SUI197509	STEFFEN Andreas	SUI	CYCLE CRAFT/OBV	3:03.78	4:47.00	15.17
25	75	USA197303	ODRISCOLL Chris	USA	SOLID RACING	3:01.49	4:47.09	15.25
26	54	ESP197202	SANTANA Jacobo	ESP	CC SANT JORDI	3:03.53	4:47.13	15.29
27	57	SWE197803	LUNDMAN Jan	SWE		3:04.13	4:47.56	15.73
28	43	ITA197311	ZANCHI Bruno	ITA	BIANCHI MARTINI	3:04.83	4:48.66	16.82

29	52	NED197201	VAN DE HATERD Wilfred	NED	BE ONE	3:04.57	4:48.77	16.94
30	18	FRA197607	LAGNEAU Cyril	FRA	SCOTT INTL	3:05.50	4:48.95	17.12
31	20	ITA196802	BONANOMI Gianluca	ITA	BIANCHI MARTINI	3:05.48	4:49.14	17.3
32	38	SUI197611	JOSEPH Michel	SUI	BE-ONE	3:05.33	4:49.21	17.38
33	9	USA197003	CARTER Eric	USA	TEAM GT	3:05.41	4:49.22	17.38
34	16	FRA197306	KOCH Guillaume	FRA	SCOTT INTL	3:04.14	4:50.01	18.18
35	39	NED197309	KRUIPER Michel	NED	CYCLE CRAFT OBG	3:07.35	4:50.10	18.26
36	51	SUI197806	BÜELER Andy	SUI	SCOTT INTL	3:06.74	4:50.72	18.89
37	53	SUI197709	CALUORI Claudio	SUI		3:05.53	4:50.88	19.05
38	77	CZE197801	SIMCIK Daniel	CZE	KANGAROO D.I.R.T	3:04.16	4:51.91	20.08
39	24	USA196910	CULLINAN Dave	USA	SCHWINN/TOYOTA	3:05.02	4:52.15	20.32
40	21	AUS197711	MCCARROLL Sean	AUS	GIANT	3:09.22	4:53.79	21.95
41	131	ESP197502	OULEGO Alex	ESP	SINTTESI MARZOCC	3:08.04	4:54.50	22.67
42	67	BRA198000	BERCHTOLD Markolf Erasmu	BRA	YETI BRASIL	3:08.98	4:54.51	22.68
43	69	RSA198111	MINNAAR Greg	RSA	SCHICK/CANNONDAL	3:09.06	4:54.82	22.99
44	85	FRA197801	SEQUERA Lionel	FRA	DF RACING	3:08.86	4:55.07	23.24
45	94	ESP197004	BARCONS Carlos	ESP	SCOTT	3:08.60	4:55.13	23.3
46	58	ITA197806	ANSELMO Eric	ITA	TURRO RACING TEA	3:07.82	4:55.19	23.35
47	79	ESP198104	ROJO Cesar	ESP	CORONAS	3:11.21	4:55.57	23.73
48	59	FIN19760302	LAIHO Antti- pekka	FIN	GT FINLAND	3:10.73	4:55.92	24.09
49	83	NED197802	TAKKENKAMP Rick	NED	CYCLE CRAFT OBG	3:09.97	4:57.18	25.34
50	126	FRA198005	COLLET Nicolas	FRA	EGOBIKE	3:11.42	4:57.40	25.57
51	45	USA196906	KING Mike	USA	TEAM GT	3:12.42	4:58.89	27.06
52	178	ESP197709	ASENSI Gustavo	ESP	CC SANT VICEN	3:11.06	4:59.33	27.5
53	137	ESP197712	ARASA Manuel	ESP	SUNN	3:12.90	5:00.21	28.38
54	49	SVK198204	POLC Filip	SVK	SEAT MERIDA KCK	3:12.77	5:00.27	28.43
55	88	ITA197607	BUGNONE Andrea	ITA	TURRO ALITALIA	3:10.87	5:00.53	28.7
56	14	FRA19770306	POUSSIN Florent	FRA	TEAM SUNN	3:09.84	5:00.54	28.71
57	136	GBR198102	CHEETHAM Jon	GBR	ROTEC	3:20.46	5:02.21	30.38

58	31	NED197704	PETERS Gerwin	NED	BE-ONE	3:07.56	5:04.20	32.37
59	89	AUT197306	PETSCHENIG Markus	AUT	UNION ST LEONHAR	3:15.39	5:04.91	33.08
60	161	POR197608	SEMEDO Tiago	POR	SETOBAL TREK/SET	3:24.13	5:13.74	41.91
61	171	ESP197306	CUESTA Eduardo	ESP	SPECIALICE	3:13.52	5:24.58	52.74
62	36	USA196711	TOMAC John	USA	TOMAC/MANITOU	3:09.46	5:31.33	59.49
63	26	ESP197308	SAIZ Oscar	ESP	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	3:51.29	5:52.01	1:20.17
64	121	BEL197706	DEFERM Stijn	BEL	RAK BIKE	4:16.02	13:35.45	9:03.61
63	GBR197210	PONTING Tim	GBR	ANIMAL/PLAYSTATI				DNF
80	BEL197312	JADUTA Taras	BEL	RAK BIKE				DNF
92	SUI197509	RHYNER Raffael	SUI	ANIMAL/PLAYSTATI				DNF
97	BEL197312	CLOSSET Pascal	BEL	DIESEL-BIANCHI				DNF
99	SWE197906	WESTMAN Tobias	SWE	TEAM CRESCENT				DNF
107	GBR197209	KITCHIN Robin	GBR	ANIMAL PLAYSTATI				DNF