

Conyers, GA, USA- 11-12.7.98- XC#7-

Hubi Finally Wins One

Hubert Pallhuber (ITA, Diamondback) knows how to maximize his opportunities when it really counts. The gregarious rider from the mountains of Italy has spent many seasons riding with front-runners in world cup action, but was never able to convert his speed into a UCI/Grundig world cup win. Last season netted him the coveted rainbow stripes of a world champion when he seized the moment and won the big one. Earlier last season he had looked destined for victory when in a two-man dual with **Rune Hoydahl** (NOR, Giant) at Mt. Snow, the Diamondback rider came oh so close to winning one before flattening on the final descent. Today, however, "Hubi" Pallhuber turned the tables on Hoydahl as he followed the Norwegian for an entire race before blowing by him in the last lap for his first world cup win.

With **Cadel Evans** (AUS, Volvo-Cannondale) relegated to a frustrating chase in a disjointed group and third place's **Miguel Martinez** (FRA, Sunn-Un) 45 seconds back by the final lap, Pallhuber duked it out with Hoydahl and **Christophe Dupouey** (FRA, Sunn-Un) after a large lead group had slowly come apart on an uncharacteristically cool day in Georgia.

With the world's top riders now physically gearing up for important season ending races like the world cup finals and the world championships, the ebb and flow of today's race made exciting spectating. Several riders had a go at the front of this fast moving race.

Action

The weather was as good as it gets around here in the summer: cloudy skies and a gentle breeze keeping temperatures down as riders lined up at noon for four and a half laps of racing on this Olympic course. The men would contest 51 kilometers over slickrock and dusty singletrack on a figure-eight shaped course, riding 15 minutes on one loop and 16 on the other.

Success and failure were foreshadowed early in the race. Pallhuber rode in third place on the start loop, Martinez in 5th and Hoydahl 11th six seconds back. World Cup series leader Evans rode with many eyes on him, from both on and off the course. On the start loop, however, he was already in 14th place, 30 seconds back. Already it looked like he would need a solo effort reminiscent of last week's impressive comeback in Canmore.

A lead group soon formed, composed of ten riders. Evans was not in it. The young Australian was seen leading a chase group over the exposed slickrock portion of the course shortly after the start of the back loop in the figure eight. With slower climbs and winding singletrack, the back loop was effectively gathering riders together, while the front loop was then spreading them out again.

Patrick Tolhoek (NED, Be-One) and **Christoph Sauser** (SUI, Diamondback) swapped the race lead for one and half laps. The work of these two split up the lead group. Dupouey, Pallhuber and Martinez formed a retaliatory trio, counter attacked and went into the lead after dropping all chasers. Sensing danger, Evans made a huge effort and actually caught this group in the trees of the back loop, but when they raised the pace he paid the price for his exertion and lost touch. This was the only time he was in contact with the leaders. Meanwhile, Hoydahl was making his way up through the field. A sustained surge took moved him up six places and he announced his presence in the lead group with an attack.

On lap three Hoydahl, Pallhuber and Dupouey led Martinez by eight seconds. Hoydahl set a stinging pace, which made Pallhuber suffer. "It was hot," he said. "When Rune tried to go away from me in the second to last lap, it was very hard." The plucky Italian, who only one week ago had been worried that he might have trained too hard in motor-paced training, hung on - finally reaping the reward of those miles behind the moto. Aware of Pallhuber's strategy, Hoydahl opted to keep a high pace. "I rode in the front for two laps and Pallhuber was sitting behind so I knew it would be very difficult to beat him," he commented. As these

four battled for the win, a chase group relentlessly followed - but at more than one and a half minutes back theirs was a hopeless pursuit.

With one lap remaining, the skies opened up with a torrential downpour. The cooling rain was just what Pallhuber needed and he took the lead as they started the final lap. Hoydahl did his own prospects no good with a crash soon after, which handed Pallhuber a ten second lead. Pallhuber explained: *"When I came through the finish I had a little gap and then I slowed down a little bit but Rune didn't come by so I got more good feeling and tried to go away."*

"Go away" is exactly what he did as the rains continued - filling a riders' tunnel to the finish in knee-deep water. Holding on to his lead of ten seconds over Hoydahl and a minute on Martinez, *"Hubi"* Pallhuber raced back to the finish and to his first world cup round win. It would be nearly three minutes before the fourth rider - **Dario Acquaroli** (ITA, Bianchi Martini) - crossed the finish after climbing back from 10th place on the previous lap.

Heavy rains at the end of a race are unusual, and with so many riders using slick tires this had an impact on the final lap. According to Pallhuber, *"I was nervous because I had slick tires and didn't know how they'd do, but Rune had the same problem. To win a world cup race - I'm very happy, and to win on the Olympic course is special."*

Martinez, although unable to catch the lead, was happy with his effort as he begins to peak for his season's last races. *"Last week in Canmore I was feeling very well and now I'm near the top of my condition. I had much in reserve today, but had trouble with the weather - I was too slow in the final lap. Now I'll concentrate on the finals in Bromont, the World Championship and Le Tour VTT."*

Evans kept himself in the race and in position waiting for something to happen, but he wasn't able to get things moving fast enough. *"I got off to a really bad start but had a feeling it would be a really good race for me if I could get to the lead group. I just took my chances and tried to maximize my opportunities because you never know what's going to happen."*

Source: **Ari Cheren**



Hubert Pallhuber

Men/Hommes

| <i>pos</i> | <i>bib</i> | <i>name/nom</i> | | <i>nat</i> | <i>UCIcode</i> | <i>time</i> |
|------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 6 | PALLHUBER | HUBERT | ITA | ITA19650917 | 2:10:56.88 |
| 2 | 2 | HÖYDAHL | RUNE | NOR | NOR19691210 | 2:11:09.25 |
| 3 | 5 | MARTINEZ | MIGUEL | FRA | FRA19760117 | 2:12:03.80 |
| 4 | 59 | ACQUAROLI | DARIO | ITA | ITA19750310 | 2:13:45.42 |
| 5 | 1 | EVANS | CADEL | AUS | AUS19770214 | 2:13:53.56 |
| 6 | 9 | SAUSER | CHRISTOPH | SUI | SUI19760413 | 2:14:31.21 |
| 7 | 3 | MEIRHAEGHE | FILIP | BEL | BEL19710305 | 2:14:55.76 |
| 8 | 39 | ARNOULD | DOMINIQUE | FRA | FRA19661119 | 2:15:03.65 |
| 9 | 14 | CHIOTTI | JEROME | FRA | FRA19720118 | 2:15:27.15 |
| 10 | 31 | DJERNIS | HENRIK | DEN | DEN19660422 | 2:15:40.36 |
| 11 | 52 | BRENTJENS | BART | NED | NED19681010 | 2:16:04.95 |
| 12 | 27 | KRISTENSEN | LENNIE | DEN | DEN19680516 | 2:16:25.50 |
| 13 | 22 | WABEL | BEAT | SUI | SUI19670523 | 2:17:02.44 |
| 14 | 24 | SHEPPARD | CHRIS | CAN | CAN19730419 | 2:17:14.69 |
| 15 | 51 | BRAMATI | LUCA | ITA | ITA19681106 | 2:17:21.61 |
| 16 | 72 | KÄSER | BERNHARD | GER | GER19720204 | 2:17:27.23 |
| 17 | 44 | SAVIGNONI | JEAN-CHRISTOPH | FRA | FRA19660806 | 2:17:40.50 |
| 18 | 29 | MANIN | CHRISTOPHE | FRA | FRA19660712 | 2:18:06.12 |
| 19 | 13 | OSTERGAARD | JAN ERIK | DEN | DEN19610220 | 2:18:25.80 |
| 20 | 8 | CRAIG | NICK | GBR | GBR19690403 | 2:18:34.83 |
| 21 | 45 | BRENES | ANDRES | CRC | CRC19641218 | 2:18:39.95 |
| 22 | 30 | HOCHSTRASSER | THOMAS | SUI | SUI19760713 | 2:18:52.26 |
| 23 | 10 | FRISCHKNECHT | THOMAS | SUI | SUI19700217 | 2:19:45.58 |
| 24 | 64 | RASMUSSEN | MICHAEL | DEN | DEN19740601 | 2:19:53.09 |
| 25 | 83 | SCHWEDLER | JENS | GER | GER19680208 | 2:19:53.78 |
| 26 | 17 | TOLHOEK | PATRICK | NED | NED19650626 | 2:20:31.71 |
| 27 | 32 | HERMIDA | JOSÉ ANTONIO | ESP | ESP19780824 | 2:21:32.57 |
| 28 | 48 | ROWNEY | PAUL | AUS | AUS19701202 | 2:21:59.40 |
| 29 | 38 | AUSTAD | HAAKON | NOR | NOR19780305 | 2:22:13.12 |
| 30 | 96 | BONNAND | CYRILLE | FRA | FRA19700805 | 2:22:45.82 |
| 31 | 41 | PETERSEN | JORGEN BO | DEN | DEN19700411 | 2:24:00.70 |
| 32 | 81 | GROVER | NEIL | CAN | CAN19770331 | 2:24:15.99 |
| 33 | 40 | JUAREZ | DAVID 'TINKER' | USA | USA19610304 | 2:24:26.39 |
| 34 | 16 | LARSEN | STEVE | USA | USA19700313 | 2:24:39.72 |
| 35 | 79 | WOODS | ROB | AUS | AUS19680305 | 2:25:23.51 |
| 36 | 63 | FLEMING | JOSH | AUS | AUS19751114 | 2:25:30.37 |
| 37 | 20 | MARTINEZ | RAPHAEL | FRA | FRA19720501 | 2:25:50.29 |
| 38 | 89 | DRASLER | ROK | SLO | SLO19790526 | 2:26:12.35 |
| 39 | 82 | WALLACE | MATT | AUS | AUS19720707 | 2:26:50.61 |
| 40 | 7 | VOLLET | GRÉGORY | FRA | FRA19750321 | 2:27:31.28 |
| 41 | 98 | MADRIGAL | ZIRANDA | MEX | MEX19770523 | 2:27:48.14 |
| 42 | 61 | MOREL | CHRISTOPHE | FRA | FRA19750616 | 2:29:33.03 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----|------------------|---------------|-----|-------------|------------|
| 43 | 70 | BAILLY | FRANCK | FRA | FRA19680110 | 2:30:44.01 |
| 44 | 88 | HUMMELSIEP | DENNIS | GER | GER19750820 | 2:31:04.54 |
| 45 | 46 | KANKOVSKY | MARTIN | CZE | CZE19671019 | 2:32:32.22 |
| 46 | 93 | TOTSUI | SCHUNSUKE | JPN | JPN19731117 | 2:35:09.91 |
| 47 | 74 | RADOMSKI | RYAH | USA | USA19770823 | 2:35:39.97 |
| 48 | 107 | HERNANDEZ LADINO | EDWARD NELSON | COL | COL19680905 | 2:36:56.01 |
| 49 | 95 | BLANCO | GABRIEL | ARG | ARG19790403 | 2:38:12.91 |
| | | | | | | |
| 50 | 99 | ARIAS SANCHEZ | JOHN RAMIRO | COL | COL19690613 | -1 LAP |
| 51 | 94 | VAN DEN ABEELE | PETER | BEL | BEL19660501 | -1 LAP |
| 52 | 121 | LEMAIRE | ERIC | USA | USA19691231 | -1 LAP |
| 53 | 90 | BENNETT | TIM | AUS | AUS19780925 | -1 LAP |
| | | | | | | |
| 54 | 120 | MARTINEZ | SALVADOR | MEX | MEX19770731 | -2 LAPS |
| 55 | 15 | AGERGAARD | JESPER | DEN | DEN19750218 | -3 LAPS |
| | | | | | | |
| | 33 | HESTLER | ANDREAS | CAN | CAN19700512 | DNF |
| | 19 | GOULD | TIM | GBR | GBR19640530 | DNF |
| | 12 | DUPOUEY | CHRISTOPHE | FRA | FRA19680808 | DNF |
| | 26 | PAULISSEN | ROEL | BEL | BEL19760427 | DNF |
| | 4 | VAN DOOREN | BAS | NED | NED19730825 | DNF |
| | 92 | HOLLERBACH | MARTIN | GER | GER19690806 | DNF |
| | 11 | TCHERKASSOV | PAVEL | RUS | RUS19720513 | DNF |
| | 18 | KORINEK | RADIM | CZE | CZE19731201 | DNF |
| | 50 | MCGRATH | SEAMUS | CAN | CAN19760305 | DNF |
| | 112 | BLACK | WILL | USA | USA19671020 | DNF |
| | 80 | SWENSON | CARL | USA | USA19700420 | DNF |
| | 106 | RANDOLPH | GREG | USA | USA19721212 | DNF |
| | 110 | MIKLIC | GREGOR | SLO | SLO19760120 | DNF |
| | 101 | ZACARIAS | ARMANDO | MEX | MEX19750109 | DNF |
| | 86 | RAVANEL | CÉDRIC | FRA | FRA19781126 | DNF |
| | 85 | GORDON | CRAIG | AUS | AUS19710207 | DNF |
| | 113 | ROLL | BOB | USA | USA19610707 | DNF |