

St Wendel, GER- 9-10.5.98- XC#4-

Meirhaeghe At Last

A thrilling sprint victory in round four, at St Wendel, made **Filip Meirhaeghe** (BEL, *Specialized/Mt Dew*) his nation's first world cup round winner. After a race charged with energy, Meirhaeghe proved the strongest of a four-rider group, and out-sprinted **Cadel Evans** (AUS, *Volvo/Cannondale*), **Rune Hoydahl** (NOR, *Giant*) and **Miguel Martinez** (FRA, *Sunn/Un*).



Some 30,000 spectators were treated to an intensely tactical race, in which the lead group almost came to a track racing style standstill shortly into the final lap. Yet when the same four riders pedalled frantically towards the finish line, the time for hesitation was through. *"I wanted to lead on the road (approaching the finish line),"* said Meirhaeghe of the final kilometre. *"On the last lap I thought about what it would take to win, and knew I had to (be) in the front,"* he added.

His thinking proved correct. The 52kg lightweight, Martinez could only watch when Meirhaeghe revealed his sprinting power, gained from pro road race experience with Brentjens this spring. Hoydahl also found himself short of pace. *"When I saw Filip at the front at the end I thought he could do it today, because he is such a good sprinter,"* remarked Hoydahl, who finished third. Evans, another famous lightweight on the circuit, finished second here last year in a sprint with Frischknecht. This year, he wanted the win but finished a bike length short. *"It's tough to lose another sprint here. It came down to who had the most kick at the end, and Meirhaeghe had it,"* admitted the young Aussie. Consolation for Evans came in the form of his placing ahead of Hoydahl. In doing this, he took the Blue Jersey from the Norwegian's shoulders and the 21 years old now leads both the Elite and U-23 categories of the World Cup.

As the race continued under a hot May sun, gaps opened up in the woodland sections, and then closed on the open tracks, where echelon lines formed to take advantage of the slipstream effect. **Thomas Frischknecht** (SUI, *Ritchey*), the winner of round three, at Budapest last week, still felt tired and dropped out.

Van Dooren was reeled in, and on the fourth lap Meirhaeghe and Hoydahl looked in control. Evans made occasional appearances at the front, testing his rivals and looking for a leader. At the finish he said: *"Everyone was looking to each other. to take the lead, but no-one wanted it. we stayed active 'though, and kept the pace up so we wouldn't be caught."*



It was not a good day for the French. Chiotti was dropped from the lead group, and Martinez and Dupouey struggled to stay in contact. Of the five riders, Evans, Hoydahl and Meirhaeghe looked the ones most likely to produce the winner.

Starting the final lap, when these five slowed almost to a standstill, Chiotti and Van Dooren exploited the indecision at the front and almost rejoined the lead group. This acted as the catalyst and the final five kilometres was ridden with an urgency seldom seen at this stage of a race. In the final woodland section, Dupouey lost contact, setting the stage for a four-way sprint for the line. It was one of the most exciting mountain bike races anybody could remember.





Meirhaeghe's win has been a long time coming. The 27 years-old Belgian had been crowned the unofficial junior world champion back in 1988, but as a senior he was in danger of being overlooked by the top teams. After several years that mixed disappointing results with flashes of brilliance, in 1998 Mountain Dew/Specialized team manager, Gert-Jan Theunisse acknowledged his potential and gave him a place alongside 1996 Olympic Champion, Bart Brentjens. Only four races into the first season with his new team, Meirhaeghe rewarded his manager's faith. *"The finish was a sudden release of energy for me, I didn't know I had that much! I've dreamt of this day for so long, I can't believe it,"* the affable Meirhaeghe smiled.

The decisive move at St Wendel was made on lap two of seven. **Bas Van Dooren** (BEL, *Be-One*) attacked and pulled a small group away from the string of 130 riders. **Christophe Dupouey** (FRA, *Sunn/Un*) was in this group, working for his team-mate Martinez. Evans and '96 World Champion, **Jerome Chiotti** (FRA, *GT*) had recently joined onto the back, while Meirhaeghe and Hoydahl worked hard with Dupouey to keep Van Dooren close.

Next race: Round five, [Plymouth](#), England, 16-17 May.

Source: *Ari Cheren*



place	bib	UCIcode	name/nom	nat	team	time	+
1	7	BEL19710305	MEIRHAEGHE Filip	BEL	MT DEW/SPECIALIZ	2:12:42.69	
2	3	AUS19770214	EVANS Cadel *	AUS	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	2:12:43.08	0.38
3	1	NOR19691210	HÖYDAHL Rune	NOR	GIANT	2:12:44.38	1.68
4	9	FRA19760117	MARTINEZ Miguel *	FRA	SUNN	2:12:47.55	4.85
5	12	FRA19680808	DUPOUEY Christophe	FRA	SUNN	2:13:18.31	35.61
6	13	NED19730825	VAN DOOREN Bas	NED	BE-ONE	2:14:03.12	1:20.42
7	17	FRA19720118	CHIOTTI Jerome	FRA	TEAM GT	2:14:54.83	2:12.13

8	11	FRA19750321	VOLLET Grégory	FRA	GIANT	2:15:37.61	2:54.91
9	26	SUI19721112	STÖCKLI Lukas	SUI	UNIVEGA-DESCENTE	2:15:43.35	3:00.65
10	8	GBR19690403	CRAIG Nick	GBR	DIAMONDBACK	2:16:17.57	3:34.88
11	45	NED19650626	TOLHOEK Patrick	NED	BE-ONE	2:17:09.44	4:26.75
12	36	FRA19731117	DUBAU Ludovic	FRA	SUNN	2:17:11.61	4:28.92
13	23	GBR19640530	GOULD Tim	GBR	SCHWINN/TOYOTA	2:17:16.02	4:33.32
14	19	ESP19780824	HERMIDA José Antonio *	ESP	SCOTT INTL	2:17:25.10	4:42.40
15	40	DEN19750218	AGERGAARD Jesper	DEN	BE-ONE	2:17:48.99	5:06.30
16	16	USA19700313	LARSEN Steve	USA	SCHWINN/TOYOTA	2:18:03.78	5:21.09
17	14	DEN19610220	OSTERGAARD Jan Erik	DEN	IKO/CORRATEC	2:18:25.61	5:42.91
18	24	CZE19731201	KORINEK Radim	CZE	CESKA SPORITELNA	2:18:28.37	5:45.67
19	72	FRA19750616	MOREL Christophe	FRA	SINTESI VERLICCH	2:18:43.21	6:00.51
20	15	GBR19661211	CLARKE Barrie	GBR	RALEIGH	2:18:54.75	6:12.06
21	29	SUI19760713	HOCHSTRASSER Thomas *	SUI	SCOTT INTL	2:19:03.33	6:20.63
22	18	ITA19650917	PALLHUBER Hubert	ITA	DIAMONDBACK	2:19:08.17	6:25.47
23	122	FRA19701216	ORCEL David	FRA	SUNN	2:19:20.11	6:37.41
24	53	DEN19680516	KRISTENSEN Lennie	DEN	GIANT	2:19:37.10	6:54.41
25	48	GER19620925	KLUGE Mike	GER	FOCUS	2:19:47.95	7:05.25
26	121	GER19680208	SCHWEDLER Jens	GER	STEVENS-JEANTEX	2:19:48.26	7:05.56
27	50	FRA19740808	DIETSCH Thomas	FRA	BE-ONE	2:20:23.72	7:41.02
28	35	ITA19700324	FONTANA Alessandro	ITA	FULL-DYNAMIX	2:20:35.90	7:53.20
29	57	AUS19701202	ROWNEY Paul	AUS	HARO	2:20:47.73	8:05.03
30	5	SUI19760413	SAUSER Christoph *	SUI	DIAMONDBACK	2:20:56.10	8:13.40
31	38	SUI19740621	HELLER Marcel	SUI	UNIVEGA-DESCENTE	2:20:56.90	8:14.20
32	98	GER19700904	BRESSER Carsten	GER	K2/LION	2:20:58.82	8:16.12
33	144	ESP19760317	MARQUEZ José *	ESP	CORONAS	2:21:05.88	8:23.18
34	25	ITA19770721	FRUET Martino *	ITA	CARRARO	2:21:13.32	8:30.62
35	62	SUI19721016	WYSSEIER Reto	SUI	SCOTT ELVIA	2:21:34.02	8:51.32
36	27	CRC19641218	BRENES Andres	CRC	RITCHEY	2:21:34.29	8:51.59
37	51	CAN19700512	HESTLER Andreas	CAN	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	2:21:55.02	9:12.32
38	22	CAN19730419	SHEPPARD Chris	CAN	CATERA/PURE ENER	2:22:09.13	9:26.43
39	37	FRA19720501	MARTINEZ Raphael	FRA	DIAMONDBACK	2:22:25.57	9:42.87
40	73	SUI19740817	BINKERT Markus	SUI	PARKPRE	2:22:54.73	10:12.03
41	78	FRA19660806	SAVIGNONI Jean-christoph	FRA	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	2:23:17.54	10:34.84
42	41	SUI19670523	WABEL Beat	SUI	K2 BIKE	2:23:32.49	10:49.79
43	30	DEN19660422	DJERNIS Henrik	DEN	AMERICAN EAGLE	2:23:48.86	11:06.16
44	160	FRA19770522	PERAUD J Christophe *	FRA	LAPIERRE	2:24:22.24	11:39.54
45	44	ESP19700929	GARCIA Luis	ESP	LIBERTO MEGAMO A	2:24:34.72	11:52.02
46	46	FRA19660712	MANIN Christophe	FRA	AMERICAN EAGLE	2:24:45.43	12:02.73
47	59	SWE19770427	JUNGÄKER Erik *	SWE	SCOTT INTL	2:24:58.65	12:15.96
48	54	DEN19700411	PETERSEN Jorgen Bo	DEN	IKO/CORRATEC	2:25:12.74	12:30.04

49	96	ESP19690124	OLABERRIA Andoni	ESP	ORBEA ZEUS VENET	2:25:31.84	12:49.14
50	126	GER19760520	FUMIC Lado *	GER	ROCKY MTN/XENOFI	2:25:32.20	12:49.50
51	68	GBR19740706	CUTHBERTSON Ian	GBR	RALEIGH	2:25:32.50	12:49.80
52	75	SWE19740601	PERSSON Roger	SWE	CRESCENT	2:25:40.43	12:57.73
53	70	ITA19740521	CHECUZ Alessandro	ITA	SCOTT INTL	2:25:44.23	13:01.53
54	131	NED19650520	WEEVERS Jan	NED	GIANT	2:25:57.22	13:14.52
55	152	NED19631227	DEKKER Henk	NED	PULSAR	2:26:16.62	13:33.93
56	82	SVK19760629	KONDIS Lubos *	SVK	SEAT MERIDA KCK	2:26:26.93	13:44.23
57	117	DEN19740601	RASMUSSEN Michael	DEN	TREK/VOLKSWAGEN	2:26:29.02	13:46.32
58	100	FRA19680110	BAILLY Franck	FRA	EGS	2:26:52.95	14:10.25
59	181	FRA19740214	JULLIOT Vincent	FRA	LAPIERRE	2:27:36.92	14:54.22
60	66	CZE19671019	KANKOVSKY Martin	CZE	CESKA SPORITELNA	2:27:50.22	15:07.52
61	107	GER19770729	REIN Axel *	GER	H + H	2:27:56.73	15:14.03
62	52	NZL19780620	LEUCHS Kashi *	NZL	VOLVO CANNONDALE	2:28:06.20	15:23.50
63	220	FRA19760413	FRECH Frederic *	FRA	SCOTT LA CLUZAS	2:28:15.83	15:33.13
64	151	GER19670529	ARNOLD Norbert	GER	SCHWALBE RACING	2:28:30.70	15:48.00
65	84	ESP19730719	FERNANDEZ Igor	ESP	ORBEA ZEUS VENET	2:28:34.54	15:51.84
66	197	NED19770522	VAN MIL Ruud *	NED	AMERICAN EAGLE	2:28:38.79	15:56.09
67	88	GER19720204	KÄSER Bernhard	GER	IKO/CORRATEC	2:28:45.45	16:02.75
68	165	ITA19730309	FRANZIN Michele	ITA	FULL-DYNAMIX	2:29:06.24	16:23.54
69	125	FRA19700805	BONNAND Cyrille	FRA		2:29:08.14	16:25.44
70	167	BEL19750321	GALLE David	BEL	DIESEL BIANCHI	2:29:22.91	16:40.21
71	34	CAN19760305	MCGRATH Seamus *	CAN	HARO	2:29:25.30	16:42.60
72	127	CAN19671108	HURLEY Bill	CAN	ORYX-PROCYCLE	2:29:35.62	16:52.92
73	221	SUI19780613	BUNDI Silvio *	SUI	SWISS BIKE NATL	2:30:06.96	17:24.26
74	157	GER19751005	BERGER Christoph	GER	VW NUTZ-FZ GT-GE	2:30:23.27	17:40.57
75	93	GER19690806	HOLLERBACH Martin	GER	H + H	2:30:44.51	18:01.81
76	139	SWE19740408	LARSSON Tommy	SWE	CRESCENT	2:30:56.01	18:13.32
77	99	GER19750820	HUMMELSIEP Dennis	GER	H + H	2:31:19.26	18:36.57
78	110	NED19751211	DE KNEGT Gerben	NED	AMERICAN EAGLE	2:31:39.58	18:56.88
79	128	NED19751108	VAN DE VEN Johan	NED	BE ONE	2:31:49.37	19:06.67
80	63	USA19650526	BISHOP Andy	USA	GARY FISHER	2:31:52.05	19:09.35
81	186	SWE19710426	PALMBERG Magnus	SWE		2:32:47.14	20:04.44
82	83	CAN19770331	GROVER Neil *	CAN	ROCKY MOUNTAIN	2:33:07.37	20:24.67
83	193	SWE19710211	ANDERSSON Tony	SWE		2:33:12.33	20:29.63
84	190	DEN19760304	BARNECHOW Christian *	DEN	ROSKILDE	2:36:02.02	23:19.32
85	155	ITA19740206	PALLHUBER Johann	ITA	RAINER BIKE TEAM	- 1 lap	
86	118	BEL19660501	VAN DEN ABEELE Peter	BEL	K2 BIKE	- 1 lap	
87	115	BEL19790218	TREVISAN Patrick *	BEL	DIESEL BIANCHI	- 1 lap	
88	247	BEL19750929	BERDEN Ben	BEL	KONA	- 1 lap	
89	203	GER19751014	NESTLE Tobias	GER	FOCUS	- 2 lap	
90	248	GER19780511	DILGER Andreas *	GER	BSE TEAM	- 2 lap	

91	91 GBR19760607	BECKINGSALE Oliver *	GBR	SCOTT UK	- 2 lap
92	146 SUI19780731	BISCHOF Christof *	SUI	SWISS BIKE NATL	- 2 lap
93	103 BEL19761101	HANKART David *	BEL		- 2 lap
94	145 DEN19770522	BONNE Thomas *	DEN	AARHUS M. K.	- 2 lap
95	205 AUT19770630	KIRCHER Robert *	AUT	OAMTC/ASVO HERMA	- 2 lap
96	140 ITA19780312	ZANOTTI Leonardo *	ITA	SCAPIN RACING	- 2 lap
97	240 BEL19770309	GAUDY Patrick *	BEL	PRO BIKE	- 2 lap
98	134 BEL19551007	DE BIE Rudy	BEL	KONA	- 3 lap
		FRISCHKNECHT			
	2 SUI19700217	Thomas	SUI	RITCHEY	DNF
	4 ITA19741202	CIONI Dario	ITA	MAPEI-KONA	DNF
	6 RUS19720513	TCHERKASSOV Pavel	RUS	DIAMONDBACK	DNF
	20 NOR19780305	AUSTAD Haakon *	NOR	GIANT	DNF
	21 GER19680328	BERNER Ralph	GER	THE GREENERY/HAW	DNF
	28 FRA19661119	ARNOULD Dominique	FRA	K2 BIKE	DNF
	31 BEL19760427	PAULISSEN Roel *	BEL	AMERICAN EAGLE	DNF
	33 ESP19681117	GARRO Juan Carlos	ESP	LIBERTO MEGAMO A	DNF
	39 GER19750517	KURCHAT Wolfram	GER	GT GERMANY	DNF
	42 FRA19720910	HERISSET Christophe	FRA	SUNN	DNF
	49 SUI19770213	KALBERER Thomas *	SUI	RITCHEY	DNF
	58 ITA19750812	BELLONI Flippo	ITA	LE RUN BIKING	DNF
	64 ITA19750310	ACQUAROLI Dario	ITA	BIANCHI MARTINI	DNF
	65 SWE19760212	MALMSTEN Johan *	SWE	TEAM STEVENS	DNF
	69 ITA19680808	DEHO Marzio	ITA	SCOTT INTL	DNF
	81 POL19740801	GALINSKI Marek	POL	LKS OPTEX	DNF
	87 CZE19770913	JEZEK Vaclav *	CZE	AUTHOR EXPANDIA	DNF
	90 ITA19720501	STAUDER Roland	ITA	RAINER BIKE TEAM	DNF
	104 SUI19770918	FLEURY Patrik *	SUI	UNIVEGA-DESCENTE	DNF
	108 NED19690923	DE LOUW Lucien	NED	GIANT	DNF
	114 POL19730514	GIL Dariusz	POL	LKS POM STRZELCE	DNF
	116 NOR19720422	LARSEN Tom	NOR	IF FRÖY	DNF
	119 FRA19750518	ROLANDEZ David	FRA	CYCLES LAPIERRE	DNF
	130 SWE19750603	TAVELL Philip	SWE		DNF
	137 GER19720309	WEICHERT Marc-timo	GER	SCHWALBE RACING	DNF
	143 CZE19761020	DLASK Petr *	CZE	AUTHOR EXPANDIA	DNF
	154 ITA19710303	INDUNI Massimo	ITA	MAPEI-KONA	DNF
		DANGELMAIER			
	156 GER19770418	Claudius *	GER	BSE TEAM	DNF
	163 GER19670722	ARENZ Jörg	GER	FOCUS	DNF
	168 SUI19720605	SCHÜTZ Roger	SUI	MTB CYCLETECH/PO	DNF
	200 SUI19691105	BRUNNER Jörg	SUI	MTB CYCLETECH/PO	DNF
	201 ITA19700824	CAUZ Michelangelo	ITA	FULL-DYNAMIX	DNF