

## Dahle Outsmarts World's Women

**Gunn-Rita Dahle** (NOR, American Eagle) came into round four of the Grundig-UCI mountain bike world cup knowing she could do well. She's fit, mentally strong and - after a disappointing season of illness and over training - finally ready to prove she was no 'one season wonder.' What Dahle didn't expect, however, was to come from a fifth-place first lap position to pass the world's best women and ride across the finish as the fourth world cup winner in as many rounds of intense competition.



"It's unbelievable - pinch me!" an effusive Dahle beamed as she wiped the sweat off her face and emptied a bottle of water over her head at the finish.

After a fast race of playing catch-up, Dahle surged to the front on the fifth, final lap, picking off race leaders **Laurence Leboucher** (FRA, Peugeot LaPoste) and **Margarita Fullana** (ESP, Mt. Dew/Specialized) to claim the victory.

Starting the second lap, Dahle was the fifth rider through, and last week's winner **Chantal Dacourt** (SUI, Trek Volkswagen) was with **Alla Epifanova** (RUS, Volvo-Cannondale) just behind.

Dacourt would drop to seventh place before finishing in 6th, while Epifanova was unable to capitalize on her early-race speed and dropped three places in lap 4 to end the day in 10th place.

St Wendel is a mainly open, fast climber's course, but under the trees it also has something for the expert bike handlers. Dahle, the fastest through the singletrack, took time from the leaders each time the going got technical. And she got stronger as the race progressed. "I was fighting in the 3rd lap, but felt good in the 4th," she said. With her plan now complete, today's winner simply poured on the power for the final descent and won a victory that perhaps could have been prevented. "We

The order of power among the women's riders was turned on its ear at St Wendel. Top riders, **Paola Pezzo** (ITA, Gary Fisher), **Alison Sydor** (CAN, Volvo-Cannondale) fifth and **Alison Dunlap** (USA, GT), finished fourth, fifth and 14th, respectively.

Dahle(25), who has not won a race since 1996, took advantage of the fast course conditions, inexperience in the lead duo, as well as the fatigue of the favourites following last week's tough mud battle at Budapest.

But Dahle claimed that all she did was ride within herself. "I tried to do my own race today at my own speed and not blow up," she explained. "It took 100% concentration and not getting too stressed."

"By the time we came into the woods [of the last lap], Gunn-Rita was in front," Leboucher, who had been driving the race for the first time in her career, commented. "I tried to catch her, but couldn't." Riding in an uncooperative partnership for most of the race, the experienced Leboucher said she had tried to ride behind Fullana, letting the rookie do most of the work, explaining "It's hard to lead."

Fullana - having her strongest ride since the '97 World's - preferred to swap leads with Leboucher, and hoped to simply outsprint her at the finish. What eventuated was a tug-of-war between two riders who talked too little and were finally punished for their individual efforts.

Said Dahle; "I expected a good ride here today because I'm fit, but I don't know where all that power came from." Wherever its origins, it was enough to carry her past the leaders briefly at the end of lap 3 and again when it counted - in the last half lap. "I passed going into the last technical section. I had seen in the first lap that the girls up front were losing time in the trees, so I knew that's where I could gain time. After I passed them, I just tried to put as much time on them as possible."

Thirteen seconds separated Dahle from second place finisher Leboucher by the end, and a struggling Fullana - who crashed in that last lap - finished third at 32 seconds. After being

[Fullana & Leboucher] didn't work together, and that's why Gunn-Rita was able to catch us," surmised Fullana.

For Leboucher, today was not so much about losing first place but proving she is someone to watch out for. "In Budapest, I knew" she smiled. "Many women were walking up hills that I was able to ride up, so I thought I could do well here today." Asked whether she had sensed a fast-moving Dahle hot on her heels, Leboucher said "No, I didn't sense her. But it was a strategic race, and I knew that if I didn't go out hard, it would come down to a sprint finish... which it did."

Meanwhile, number-one ranked **Alison Sydor** (CAN, Volvo-Cannondale) was having a struggle of her own, going from third to fifth in the first laps, then finally ending her day in fifth. "The competition's so good now that if you're not 100%, you're not going to win," the leader's jersey holder said. Dunlap ended in 14th, also demonstrating the toll last week's mudfest took on many of the top-ranked women.

passed in the woods, Fullana fell in the rocky descent and was then passed by Leboucher. "She passed and then it was too late," Fullana reflected. "It's OK though, I'm very happy with today's results. It's my first full year and I have a lot to learn. I will win one someday."



The women who normally dominate seemed worn out. Pezzo - who *dnf'd* at Budapest - rode in the lead for the first lap with Fullana, 20 seconds ahead of Sydor and Leboucher who were riding in third and fourth. Race favorite Alison Dunlap quickly dropped to 9th place, where she would spend much of the race, losing ground every lap.

Action continued on Saturday afternoon with a men's cross-country qualifier which would pare the large field to a regulation 130 men. Then Sunday would feature the men's competition. Women will next compete next week in [Plymouth](#), England.

Source: Ari Cheren



place	bib	UCIcode	name/nom	nat	team	time	+
1	6	NOR19730210	DAHLE Gunn-rita	NOR	AMERICAN EAGLE	1:51:36.90	
			LEBOUCHER				
2	9	FRA19720222	Laurence	FRA	PEUGEOT LA POSTE	1:51:49.98	13.08
			FULLANA				
3	3	ESP19720409	Margarita	ESP	MT DEW/SPECIALIZ	1:52:09.68	32.77

4	4	ITA19690108	PEZZO Paola	ITA	GARY FISHER	1:53:26.05	1:49.15
5	1	CAN19660909	SYDOR Alison	CAN	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	1:54:45.71	3:08.81
6	7	SUI19660623	DAUCOURT Chantal	SUI	TREK/VOLKSWAGEN	1:55:46.99	4:10.08
7	11	CAN19660316	REDDEN Christina	CAN	RITCHEY	1:56:00.02	4:23.12
8	17	AUS19710603	GRIGSON Mary	AUS	A.I.S.	1:56:00.66	4:23.76
9	25	ITA19720406	DE NEGRI Nadia	ITA	BIANCHI MARTINI	1:56:14.31	4:37.40
10	8	RUS19761202	EPIFANOVA Alla	RUS	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	1:57:29.83	5:52.92
11	10	CAN19591226	TOMLINSON Lesley	CAN	POLO SPORT	1:58:27.71	6:50.81
12	36	SUI19701222	BLATTER Barbara	SUI	SWISS BIKE NATL	1:59:17.70	7:40.80
13	15	USA19650312	JACQUES Tammy	USA	SCHWINN/TOYOTA	2:00:37.94	9:01.04
14	2	USA19690727	DUNLAP Alison	USA	TEAM GT	2:00:59.00	9:22.10
15	26	CAN19670127	PALMER-KOMAR Susan	CAN	HARO	2:01:08.48	9:31.58
16	14	FRA19690125	TEMPORELLI Sandra	FRA	PEUGEOT LA POSTE	2:03:01.14	11:24.24
17	33	SUI19640723	GASSMANN Daniela	SUI	WHEELER	2:03:15.70	11:38.79
18	41	ESP19671215	ROVIRA Silvia	ESP	MARIN SPAIN	2:03:45.34	12:08.44
19	12	SUI19610508	FÜRST Silvia	SUI	BE-ONE	2:04:05.69	12:28.79
20	23	SWE19701227	JONSSON Annica	SWE	CRESCENT	2:04:09.23	12:32.33
21	66	NED19730125	VINK Elsbeth	NED	AMERICAN EAGLE	2:05:10.40	13:33.49
22	65	BEL19641010	LAROY Lory	BEL	BE-ONE	2:05:44.42	14:07.52
23	43	GBR19650121	ROBINSON Louise	GBR	RALEIGH	2:05:57.22	14:20.32
24	20	GER19711227	SPITZ Sabine	GER	TEAM KONA-EMS	2:06:11.52	14:34.61
25	55	ITA19730606	GOLDIN Annarita	ITA	CARRARO	2:06:15.26	14:38.36
26	28	ITA19591123	GRASSI Liuccia	ITA	CICLI MAGGI	2:06:54.58	15:17.68
27	32	ITA19721024	SALA Veronica	ITA	AVIOTEC FIOCCO G	2:07:11.37	15:34.47
28	29	CAN19761119	DORION Melanie	CAN	ORYX-PROCYCLE	2:07:19.08	15:42.18
29	59	AUT19730405	BRAUMANN Birgit	AUT	ROOX/ROCKY MOUNTAIN	2:07:24.18	15:47.28
30	73	GER19731108	ALFES Susanne	GER	TEAM 2 SUNN	2:08:05.20	16:28.30
31	48	AUT19670510	EMBACHER Hildegard	AUT	OAMTC RV FORD SC	2:08:55.27	17:18.37
32	83	GER19750826	HELMKE Katrin	GER	STEVENS-JEANTEX	2:09:41.74	18:04.84
33	22	GER19711114	MICHELS-SMITH Andrea	GER	IKO/CORRATEC	2:10:00.07	18:23.17
34	21	CAN19730517	MCQUAID Melanie	CAN	ROCKY MOUNTAIN	2:10:43.80	19:06.90
35	58	JPN19700524	KOBAYASHI Kanako	JPN	A & F	2:10:46.58	19:09.68
36	56	GER19670901	JÜNGST Birgit	GER	SCOTT/POLAR RACI	2:10:46.93	19:10.03
37	60	ESP19730927	PUIGGROSS Janet	ESP	SACHS-JKPE	2:10:56.96	19:20.06
38	87	GER19680715	OBENLAND Susanne	GER	CENTURION WOBA	2:11:15.52	19:38.62
39	46	BEL19710602	VAN DEUN Hilde	BEL	SMOUT	2:11:37.16	20:00.26
40	35	GBR19751119	COPNALL Jenny	GBR	BIKEPARK/RALEIGH	2:11:56.28	20:19.38
41	80	ESP19740520	MOLL Ruth	ESP	SCOTT SPAIN	2:12:13.67	20:36.77
42	45	CZE19640201	POLIVKOVA Kaja	CZE	PRO FREE SPORT	2:12:23.62	20:46.72
43	85	NED19680902	LENSEN Marielle	NED		2:12:33.54	20:56.64
44	31	FRA19690624	CLARET Danièle	FRA	EGS	2:12:47.06	21:10.16
45	75	GER19720321	SCHWING Katrin	GER	STORCK	2:12:59.78	21:22.88

46	70 FRA19660501	BACH Marita	FRA	GITANE	2:13:24.35 21:47.45
47	64 ITA19711019	MARSILIO Claudia	ITA	KLEIN MODOLO RAC	2:15:34.55 23:57.65
48	77 GER19730131	DOPLEB Sabine	GER	GIANT DEUTSCHLAN	2:17:20.48 25:43.58
49	81 FRA19761225	BOUTTECON Emmanuelle	FRA	SCOTT	2:18:09.30 26:32.40
50	68 NED19780406	VAN DE BRAND Daphny	NED	BE ONE	2:18:48.10 27:11.20
51	61 SWE19790805	ERIKSSON Helena	SWE	VOLVO CANNONDALE JD	- 1 lap
52	69 SUI19740318	BÜRGI Rita	SUI	SWISS BIKE NATL	- 1 lap
53	82 NED19690710	VAN LOON Annemiek	NED	TREK STAPPENBELT	- 1 lap
54	102 GER19730317	RAHNER Carolin	GER	ROTWILD-FIAT	- 1 lap
55	76 BEL19610508	BRACKX Annick	BEL	TREK USA	- 1 lap
56	84 NED19741010	ROTTEVEEL Marlies	NED		- 1 lap
57	93 NED19670415	WINTERS Bea	NED		- 1 lap
58	30 ITA19680704	STROPPARO Annabella	ITA	VOLVO/CANNONDALE	- 1 lap
59	92 NED19700826	VAN BEEK Genevieve	NED	WAGENBERG	- 2 lap
60	94 BEL19700406	BLANCHART Jo	BEL	TREK USA	- 2 lap
61	103 GER19660426	BÜSSEMAYER Christiane	GER	TEAM KÖNIG RADSP	- 2 lap
62	96 GER19650721	BÜHRING Gabriele	GER	PIRATE	- 2 lap
63	104 GER19790126	ULBRICH Carolin	GER	TEAM 2 SUNN	- 2 lap
64	95 BEL19720407	DEROO Mieke	BEL	TREK USA	- 2 lap
65	101 GER19711122	MOLINNUS Petra	GER	TEAM K2-LION	- 2 lap
66	90 BEL19751107	CAGNIE Silvie	BEL	TREK USA	- 2 lap
67	100 NED19730205	MULDER Esther	NED		- 2 lap
68	19 SWE19720302	LINDBERG Madeleine	SWE	CRESCENT	- 3 lap
	5 GBR19680303	ALEXANDER Caroline	GBR	RITCHEY	DNF
	13 GER19650904	ZU PUTTLITZ Hedda	GER	BE-ONE	DNF
	24 GER19680826	MARUNDE Regina	GER	VW/NUTZ./FZ./GT	DNF
	63 GER19731231	FRÄDRICH Birgit	GER	HAWK GREENERY	DNF
	74 GER19740208	WOLFRAM Doris	GER	GHOST RACING	DNF
	86 BEL19670825	VAN AERTSELAERE Carine	BEL	CARROSI RACING	DNF
	89 FRA19791016	MARCOUYRE Hélène	FRA	MBK	DNF
	97 BEL19651231	RONSSSE Karine	BEL		DNF

18 GBR19700608	BRUNGER Tracy	GBR K2 BIKE	DNS
62 NED19730630	DORLAND Corine	NED BE ONE	DNS