

# BIG's News Letter - 2009.02

## English Version

### Edito: "Kevin Speeding"

Another neologism! This one doesn't come from Wikipedia; François Candau invented it and told me about it during the Allgäu meeting. What is it? When you start a long day of climbing or when you finish it, you might be tempted to ride carefully your first ascent or achieve the last one with difficulty. Does it mean you are coward or exhausted? Not at all, you are Kevin Speeding a BIG! That means you are climbing quietly but surely the way our friend Kevin Speed (Member 155) usually climbs. And that is absolutely not the same: you are using a method that wins 50 Bigs every year for a total amount of 502 claims (7<sup>th</sup> in overall ranking of the Challenge). I tried out myself this concept in the last BIG of the last day in Bayern meeting. In Südfeld (N°198), my fourth Big of the day, I thought during a while that I was a bit tired. Indeed I was not! I was just Kevin Speeding that BIG and this gives your morale a boost! By the way, since long our Italian friends used to say « Chi va piano, va sano e va lontano ». Let us translate in BIG language: Kevin Speeding is a very relevant advice for peakbagging the BIG Superlist.

### 1. TOP5 BIG news

#### TOP 1: 2009 an amazing year....

Yes I know, 2009 is not over yet and still I already state that 2009 is an amazing year. Why? Sorry, how come 2009 is such an amazing year? Well, have you looked at the 2009 and the general classification?

- We have 4 members who already claimed more than 100 BIGs in 2009. That's Luigi SPINA (377), Cecilia TORELLI (618), Wim van Els (122) and Eric LUCAS (15).
- And besides Cecilia TORELLI (618) also 3 other woman can be found in the top 20 of the general classification: Nuria ESCUER MESTRES (2377), Claudia SOMMER (192) and Dominique VAN STIPHOUT (617).
- We have 2 members who passed 800 BIGs in 2009 (Eric LUCAS (15) and Etienne MAYEUR(33)). They have been fighting for the number 1 position in the general classification throughout 2009. And they are actually creeping up towards the ultimate goal: 1,000 BIGs.
- We have 1 member who passed the 600 BIGs limit in 2009: Alain JACQUEMIN(31).
- We have 2 members who have reached BIG 10 in 2009 which means they cycled more than 500 BIGs in total. These are Kevin SPEED (155) and Wim VAN Els (122). Wim by the way may also call himself a **BAG** (**A**dventurous cyclsclimber) as he cycled more than 500 BIGs and did so in over 20 countries and in Europe and 3 continents other than Europe.
- And last but not least our most popular ascent, Galibier (291) has been climbed more than 1,000 times in 2009 by BIG members! And l'Alpe d'Huez (290) too!

These are truly amazing figures don't you agree? They really show that the challenge that BIG offers is alive and kicking! I hope they will motivate others to go out there and try to improve their ranking. Don't let these impressive figures depress you. You can always "Kevin Speed" your way up in the general ranking just like me or like Kevin Speed himself ☺☺.

#### TOP 2: 2010 a BIG year....

- a) Now I do it again! 2010 hasn't even started and I already refer to it as a BIG year. If you read the last newsletter well then you know what I am talking about. It's about **BIG day** on the **21<sup>st</sup> of March 2010**.

Yes, 25 years ago, in 1985, the foundation was laid for the BIG challenge. If you apply some math to the years I mentioned then you will see that the challenge BIG will exist 25 years in 2010. So it is indeed a BIG year as we celebrate the challenge BIG's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Keep an eye open as more details are becoming available. The members who already registered (look on <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/bigday-25photos.htm>). Already registered? Yes, you can already register on: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/thebigday.htm> Please do if you have plans to come and even if you are not totally sure yet.

- b) Then of course we will have the official BIG meeting in the UK in 2010. The date has been set to the 13th to the 16th of May. Details can be found on: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/lakedistrict/lakedistrict2010.htm>
- c) And last but not least there is Operation 2525. The what? Well, I can't tell you much more either. It's a surpris as you can read on: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/operation2525.htm> Keep chekcing out this page if you are curious. I think the die-hard BIG members will like it for sure.

### **TOP 3: Gatherings**

Well, the official BIG meeting in Germany/Austria has come and gone. I am sure that all of the people who joined will tell you the same. It was great to be together and to share our passion in words and in deeds also. Our president's speech is available if you are interested (<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/comments.htm> at the bottom of the page) as well as a shipload of pictures of this event (<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/photos.htm>) and a picture summary (<http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/summary.htm>)

And the Ligurian crossroad has come and gone already too. It has been a great success with many participants. Pictures can be found on: <http://bigascensions.free.fr/rendezvous/liguria/liguria-photos.htm> and <http://www.shareimage.com/viewalbum.php?user=henrytree>.

### **TOP 4: A mix of information**

In the news part you could have read already that the famous BIG review has become available online in PDF form (Adobe Acrobat Reader required). And it is not only the 2009 Review but also the Review's of 2006, 2007 and 2008 also. So if you are interested in reading stories about BIGs written by other members and want to look at some nice pictures that come along with that then please go to: <http://www.challenge-big.eu/reviews.htm>

Then there is a contest that has been set up by Martin Kool. The Review has a nice picture on the cover and every year it's a hell of a job to find a nice picture for this cover. This year we want to give you the opportunity to have your picture on the cover of the BIG Review of 2010. Here are the prerequisites:

- Sharp pictures in a "portrait" format
  - High reslution (more than 6 megapixel)
  - A BIG on the photo
- Last years, for example, we had pictures of:Lac de Tseuzier, Honister pass, Izoard and Stelvio.

The photo of the winner will be on the cover of the Review 2010 and the winner receives a small attention. Enthusiastic? Send your pictures before the end of 2009 to Martin Kool: [mm.kool@quicknet.nl](mailto:mm.kool@quicknet.nl)

Be aware that we are continuously updating the descriptions of the BIGs with cotations and GoogleEarth tracks (Klet', Pancir, Hochtannberg, to name a few). But this information is only availabl to the contributing (i.e. paying) members. For the members who are contributing members, please pay contributions before the 31st of december.

For the class 1 contributing members (paying more than € 15.00) the members can indicate if they want to pay the surplus money or part of it for the sticker initiative. If a class 1 member indicates that besides the € 15.00 contribution he/she wants to pay € 10.00 for the sticker initiative then this money will be used to buy new and better (UV resistant for instance) stickers that will be placed at the top of our BIGs by volunteering members (see newsletter 2009/02 for more information)

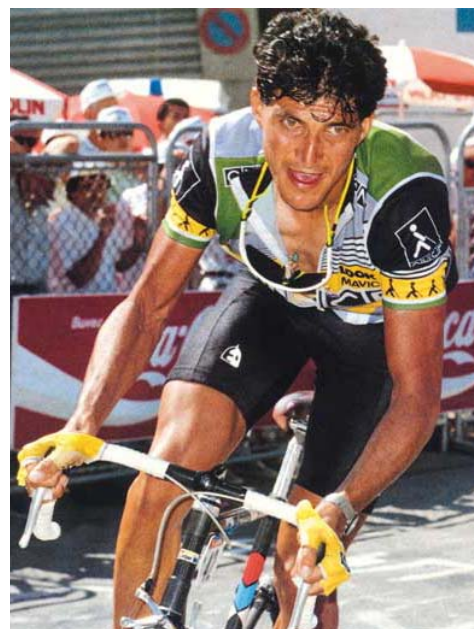
### TOP 5: Number 2500

Eduardo CHOZAS is BIG member VIP n° 2500. It is always a difficult exercise to find a VIP member representing your own country in the Challenge. He must be preferably a good climber, above reproach concerning doping and of course interested in joining the Challenge. Those conditions were respected with Eduardo Chozas who at the end of Claudio Montefusco's quest declared he was « honoured to join this Challenge that promotes cyclo-climbing ».

Let us remind you of the professional career of our new member who won fame through his results in the main national tours: 6th in Vuelta, 8th in Giro (with 3 stage wins)



and 6th in Tour de France with 4 climbing stage wins among which in



1986 on top on col du Granon (BIG 292), till today the highest arrival ever on Tour de France (2 413 metres). We thus have a new VIP climber in the challenge. After a 14 years long career, Eduardo CHOZAS is still living in cycling business. He organises training camps, is a commentator for TV and radios. He also works for cycling specialized magazines such as Ciclismo a Fondo (for who he is technical director) and Pedalier. More information on this address: [www.echozas.com](http://www.echozas.com)



## The BIG is online.

Since I now write this chapter and I have no personal pages on the web, I may choose whoever I want! That is why this time I have chosen to highlight the blog of one person very involved in the Challenge, the newsletter and the past meeting: our secretary Helmuth DEKKERS. We knew the nickname he has chosen for himself: the BIG Bad



Wolf, meaning his appetite for Bigs that he likes to swallow three in a row.

Since Oberstdorf he won another name attributed by our President: The right arm.

I thus suppose that it is with his right hand that Helmuth writes the pages of his blog: <http://www.phme-dekkers.demon.nl/> whenever his activities either professional, familial or for BIG Challenge enable him to do so.

Because he likes writing, Helmuth tells us about his discovery of the BIG Challenge and his increasing involvement in it, the choice of his nickname, his passion for biking and ice skating in winter (with nice pictures of frozen Dutch landscapes), his BIG hunting tours nearby (Limburg, Luxemburg, Moselle) or much more distant and adventurous (Peru), his participation in BIG meetings (Trento,

Flanders, soon? Allgäu). We got to tell that the whole family is member of the Challenge: Patricia who attended Flanders 2008 and Allgäu 2009 meetings, Erwin who was in Flanders too and Marloes more discreet but who send her boyfriend Jeroen de Laat in the BIG hordes. At last Helmuth is a real fan of Douglas Adams' humour and his references to HHGTTG (The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy) are numerous. You will not need however a Babel Fish to understand the adventures of the BIG Bad Wolf : everything is written in English.





## About a BIG

Which was the best BIG in the Allgäu meeting?

We had a lot of debates about Nebelhorn: ride able or not, the question is still pending. Some managed to climb it but the road cover perplexed them a lot.

We had also a debate on the road of Allgäuer Berghof (n°194) between those who stopped at the inn and those who carried on in the private way for another kilometre up to the ski lift. This could have been a trivial detail but this other kilometre was made of stiff slopes over 15%, 20% and even 25%. This will remain the challenge for those who did not take up the Nebelhorn challenge. Nevertheless on this point, our Presi-Dan remained inflexible: the BIG stops at the inn. Besides, later in the meeting, he will pronounce this implacable sentence: where is the top of a BIG? Just before the downhill! There you are, for those who could not attend, we did not want to keep for us this technical advise that gives a decisive advantage in the Challenge. But we would not be surprised to find this now famous maxim in the end of Daniels' e-mails: Where is the top? The top is just before the downhill !

Well, you can now imagine the general spirit of the meeting:

The most acclaimed BIG of the meeting is Austrian and is called Erhwalderalm (611). Coming from Lermoos, this charming village which is Berwang's (n°605) foot, we enter this cirque that the Austrians named Zugspitze Arena



Indeed you face the higher point in Germany (2 962 metres). The Austrians consider he is 27 centimetres lower the Germans (different sea level reference!). But it did not ease our climb.

It is very easy to find the foot of this Big. It is located in Ehrwald that you will have to cross through its main street towards the ski lift. Many signboards indicate Erhwaldernalm. The Big road follows the ski lift on the left side in a narrow asphalted way. This Big is a short one (5,2 kms) but steep. Its profile is clear: one 5% kilometre to get ready, 3 hard kilometres: 11%, 14% and 11% with 17%, 18% slopes, one quieter 7% kilometre partly gravelled.



You should not see any car in this BIG but certainly hill-walkers and MTB. You

understood that the difficulty of this Big is real but the reward at the top is worth it. A restaurant and a large terrace are at your disposal with places to park bikes, the statutory beer (one Big, one Beer), delicious desserts or ice creams. All around you are magnificent summits. Our Italian friends told us they felt at home in the Dolomites. On this panoramic criterion, Erwaldernalm headed the poll.



The downhill is not difficult. Note that you may also use the ski lift if you face a mechanical problem.



Here is one of the many pleasures of the 2009 official meeting, with:

- The exchanges between members from 10 different countries.
- The brilliant quizz prepared by Daniel and Helmuth with presents from everywhere
- A friendly and festive animation
- Encounters on the road with BIGgers riding in the area
- A nice collection of claimed BIGs

And you will understand why (and how!) the participants were so pleased and invite you to join them for the next meeting.



Pictures : Enrico Alberini, Raphael Coucke, Bernard Frogneux

*The newsletters team,*

*François CANDAU*

*Helmuth DEKKERS*

*Joël & Jean GANDOLF*

*Daniel GOBERT*

*Claudio MONTEFUSCO*

*Piero ROTA*

*Nico STAES*

