

WORLD LONGTRACK FINALS

1971 – 1996

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Pre 1971

Before we look at the first World Longtrack Final in 1971, we must take a peek at its prototype, the European Final. The first of these was held in 1957 and won by the Norwegian legend Leif "Basse" Hveem. The term 'legend' is often thrown about like confetti but in this case, it is well earned !

The next 3 Finals were all won by West Germany's Josef Hofmeister. No-one was ever able to achieve the 'Triple Crown' in the World Finals, but 2 riders did it in its forerunner. Hofmeister was joined by another West German, Manfred Poschenrieder winning in '66, '67 and '68. The closest anyone got in the World Final was England's Simon Wigg who won the Finals of '93 and '94, only to be beaten in the Gold Medal run-off in '95 by his England team-mate, Kelvin Tatum!

Swedish riders excelled in the Euro Finals, 1954 World Speedway Final bronze medalist, Olle Nygren took the bronze in the '59 Final. Ove Fundin, reigning World Speedway Champion at the time, was 2nd in the '61 Final behind Timo Laine of Finland. Just over a week later, Fundin won his 3rd World Speedway Final. Bertil Strid was Sweden's first Euro Champion, winning the Finals of '62 and '63. The Swedes were interrupted in '64 by Denmark's Kurt W. Petersen.

On the 12th of September 1965, Swedish star Bjorn Knutson won the Euro Final. A week later, he won the World Speedway Final as well. Now while it's true that Ivan Mauger was the first rider to win both 'World' Finals in the same year, its equally true that Knutson was the first rider to win both sports Premier events in the same year !!!

The 1968 season saw 3 New Zealanders enter the Championship, 4 time World Speedway Champion Barry Briggs along with Ivan Mauger and Gary Peterson. Peterson went out at the first round but Briggs and Mauger both qualified from the same Semi-Final to the Grand Final on the 30th of June. However neither took their place at Muhldorf.

After the Pochenrieder 'Triple Crown', England's Don Godden took the Title in '69 and the last European Champion was Norway's Jon Odegaard in 1970.

14 years of The European Longtrack Final set the stage for the next 26 World Longtrack Finals. Join me as we go to Oslo, Norway for the 1971 event...

1971

Ivan Mauger was the reigning World Speedway Champion. He had in fact won the last 3 World Speedway Finals in a row, 1968, 69 and 70. It was the only time in the 49 year history of the World Speedway Final that this was done. Now, he had a new World Final to aim for, The World Longtrack Final. He comfortably qualified for the Final along with fellow Kiwi Barry Briggs but Denmark's Ole Olsen failed to do so.

The first World Longtrack Final was held in Oslo, Norway on September 1st. After 3 rounds, Ivan and the West German legend Manfred Poschenrieder were unbeaten scoring 18 points each. Sweden's Runo Wedin had two wins and a third giving him 15. Heats 10 and 11 were the Semi-Finals and the situation changed remarkably. Wedin won heat 10 from Barry Briggs and Mauger. So now Wedin had 21 equal with Mauger. But when Poschenrieder was 2nd in heat 11 behind West Germany's Jan Kater, he had 22 Points. So going into heat 12, the Grand Final, Poschenrieder had to win for the World Title. But victory for either Wedin or Mauger would see the winner take the Gold medal.

With Mauger having problems with his factory Jawa, he borrowed Don Godden's J.A.P for the decider. AND IT WORKED ! Ivan Mauger won the Final to score 27 points overall. Poschenrieder was 2nd to finish 1 point behind. Kater was 3rd in the Final and Wedin was 4th, giving him 23 points and the Bronze Medal.

So Ivan Mauger was now World Longtrack Champion as well as World Speedway Champion. That however lasted for 9 more days as on the 10th of September, Ole Olsen won the World Speedway Final and Ivan was 2nd!

1971 World Longtrack Final 1 September Oslo Norway.

heat 1	Poschenrieder, Siegl, Briggs, Unterholzner, Odegard - , Zierk - .
heat 2	Wedin, Sigurd, Norgaard, Thomsson, Koski, Matl.
heat 3	Mauger, Kater, Petersen, Hornfeldt, Nielsen, Godden.
heat 4	Poschenrieder, Thomsson, Siegl, Sigurd, Matl, Zierk - .
heat 5	Wedin, Godden, Norgaard, Kater, Nielsen, Koski.
heat 6	Mauger, Hornfeldt, Briggs, Petersen, Unterholzner, Odegard - .
heat 7	Poschenrieder, Unterholzner, Wedin, Petersen, Sigurd, Kater.
heat 8	Mauger, Nielsen, Matl, Koski, Briggs -, Zierk - .
heat 9	Odegard, Godden, Thomsson, Norgaard, Siegl, Hornfeldt.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wedin, Briggs, Mauger, Godden, Siegl, Petersen - .
Semi-Final heat 11	Kater, Poschenrieder, Norgaard, Sigurd, Unterholzner, Thomsson.
Grand Final heat 12	Mauger, Poschenrieder, Kater, Wedin, Norgaard, Briggs

1st	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	6 6 6 3 6	27
2nd	Manfred Poschenrieder	West Germany	6 6 6 4 4	26
3rd	Runo Wedin	Sweden	6 6 3 6 2	23
4	Jan Kater	West Germany	4 2 0 6 3	15
5	Bent Norgaard	Denmark	3 3 2 3 1	12
6	Barry Briggs	New Zealand	3 3 - 4 0	10
7	Don Godden	England	0 4 4 2	10
8	Hans Siegl	West Germany	4 3 1 1	9
9	Sven Sigurd	Sweden	4 2 1 2	9
10	Willihard Thomsson	Sweden	2 4 3 0	9
11	Josef Unterholzner	West Germany	2 1 4 1	8
12	Kurt W Petersen	Denmark	3 2 2 -	7
13	Berndt Hornfeldt	Sweden	2 4 0	6
14	Jan Holm Nielsen	Denmark	1 1 4	6
15	Jon Odegard	Norway	- - 6	6
16	Walter Matl	West Germany	- 1 3	4
17	Reijo Koski	Finland	1 0 2	3
18	Hans Zierk	West Germany	- - -	0

1972

Defending World Champion Ivan Mauger found himself in big trouble on June 1st, as he crashed heavily in the World Pairs Final. Not only did this crash cost him and his partner, Ronnie Moore the Gold Medals, it smashed him up pretty good and put both his wrists in plaster. He had qualified for the Semi-Final no problem but this was on June 11!

Many lesser mortals would have surrendered to the pain barrier but not Mauger. This is what separated him from the overwhelming majority of others. He got himself sorted and got on with the task in hand, winning the Semi-Final and booking his place for the World Final less than a month later.

The qualifying rounds had taken out such stars as Barry Briggs, Kurt W. Petersen and Anders Michanek. World Number 3, Runo Wedin qualified as reserve along with World Speedway Champion, Ole Olsen. However Wedin got a reprieve as West German, Alois Wiesbock was unable to take his place in the Final.

On the 9th of July in the Bavarian countryside, Muhldorf hosted the 2nd World Longtrack Final. It was a beautiful day and at the end of it, Ivan Mauger had swept all before him on the Works Jawa that this time, did the job to the end. He was unbeaten in successfully defending his crown finishing 7 points clear of his nearest rival, Manfred Poschenrieder, taking the Silver Medal second year running.

An amazing achievement for Mauger considering the injuries he was carrying. Even more so as on September 16, he won the World Speedway Final as well! And so yes, Ivan became the first rider to win both 'World' Titles in the same year. However, he joined Sweden's Bjorn Knutson in winning both sports Premier events in the same season.

1972 World Longtrack Final 9 July Muhldorf West Germany.

heat 1	Poschenrieder, Siegl, Odegard, Zierk, Olin, Kastl fall.
heat 2	Norgaard, Thomsson, Svab, Kater, Hansen, Haraldsen.
heat 3	Mauger, Godden, Angermuller, Sprenger, Wedin, Schwarze.
heat 4	Norgaard, Siegl, Poschenrieder, Kastl, Hansen, Haraldsen.
heat 5	Mauger, Svab, Thomsson, Kater, Godden, Sprenger.
heat 6	Zierk, Angermuller, Odegard, Schwarze, Olin, Wedin.
heat 7	Odegard, Kastl, Thomsson, Sprenger, Haraldsen, Angermuller -.
heat 8	Poschenrieder, Godden, Noregaard, Kater, Schwarze, Olin.
heat 9	Mauger, Siegl, Svab, Zierk, Hansen, Wedin.
Semi-Final heat 10	Poschenrieder, Angermuller, Zierk, Siegl, Thomsson, Kater.
Semi-Final heat 11	Mauger, Svab, Kastl, Odegard, Norgaard, Godden -.
Grand Final heat 12	Mauger, Odegard, Siegl, Poschenrieder, Norgaard, Svab -.

1st	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	6 6 6 6 6	30
2nd	Manfred Poschenrieder	West Germany	6 3 6 6 2	23
3rd	Jon Odegard	Norway	3 3 6 2 4	18
4	Hans Siegl	West Germany	4 4 4 2 3	17
5	Bent Norgaard	Denmark	6 6 3 1 1	17
6	Antonin Svab	CZ	3 4 3 4 -	14
7	Hans Zierk	West Germany	2 6 2 3	13
8	Josef Angermuller	West Germany	3 4 - 4	11
9	Willihard Thomsson	Sweden	4 3 3 1	11
10	Don Godden	England	4 1 4 -	9
11	Rudolf Kastl	West Germany	f 2 4 3	9
12	Jan Kater	West Germany	2 2 2 0	6
13	Heinrich Sprenger	West Germany	2 0 2	4
14	Gottfried Schwarze	West Germany	0 2 1	3
15	Henning Hansen	Denmark	1 1 1	3
16	Matti Olin	Finland	1 1 0	2
17	Nils Haraldsen	Norway	0 0 1	1
18	Runo Wedin res	Sweden	1 0 0	1
	Alois Wiebock	West Germany	Q.n.s	
	Ole Olsen res	Denmark	d.n .r	

1973

The big question was, could Ivan Mauger win 3 years in a row? This he had achieved in World Speedway Finals, 1968, 69 and 70. Two riders had done this in the European Finals, West German aces Josef Hofmeister and Manfred Poschenrieder. Well, this question was answered on May 13th as Ivan failed to qualify from this qualifying round. 10 points not enough for a Semi-Final place. The World Final would be much the poorer without him but it did make for the most open Final in its history.

Barry Briggs again failed to make it and for the second year running, Alois Wiesbock qualified but was unable to ride. One rider who entered the competition for the first time was West German, Egon Muller. He went all the way to the Final and of the 26 World Finals, he would ride in 20 of them!!! Even more amazing as in two years, he didn't enter. And it wouldn't be long before he wrote his name into Longtrack folklore.

The 1973 World Longtrack Final was held back in Oslo on September 20. After 4 rounds with the Grand Final left to run, West Germany's Hans Siegl was unbeaten and looked certain to lift the crown. He had 20 points, one more than Ole Olsen while Poschenrieder had 17. The Grand Final saw certain victory become heartbreak for Siegl however as he failed to score, squeezed to the rear, watching Olsen race to the Gold Medal instead.

For the Great Dane, it was a massive achievement and one he would take great delight in as injury had all but wrecked his hopes of winning the World Speedway Final earlier in the month. And, this would prove to Ole's one and only World Longtrack Final Gold Medal!

1973 World Longtrack Final 20 September Oslo Norway.

heat 1	Poschenrieder, Kater, Thomsson, Muller, Hornfeldt, Norgaard.
heat 2	Angermuller, Spinka, Wedin, Samuelsson -, Majster -, Odegard -.
heat 3	Siegl, Olsen, Lindblom, Godden, Egedius, Storm.
heat 4	Olsen, Poschenrieder, Wedin, Storm -, Majster -, Norgaard -.
heat 5	Godden, Thomsson, Angermuller, Hornfeldt, Egidus, Samuelsson.
heat 6	Siegl, Kater, Muller, Spinka, Lindblom, Odegard.
heat 7	Siegl, Poschenrieder, Angermuller, Thomsson, Odegard -, Storm -.
heat 8	Olsen, Godden, Majster, Kater, Spinka, Hornfeldt.
heat 9	Muller, Wedin, Egidus, Norgaard, Lindblom, Samuelsson.
Semi-Final heat 10	Siegl, Poschenrieder, Angermuller, Thomsson, Egidus, Muller.
Semi-Final heat 11	Olsen, Godden, Kater, Lindblom, Wedin, Spinka.
Grand Final heat 12	Olsen, Godden, Poschenrieder, Kater, Angermuller, Siegl.

1st	Ole Olsen	Denmark	4 5 5 5 5	24
2nd	Hans Siegl	West Germany	5 5 5 5 0	20
3rd	Manfred Poschenrieder	West Germany	5 4 4 4 3	20
4	Don Godden	England	2 5 4 4 4	19
5	Jan Kater	West Germany	4 4 2 3 2	15
6	Josef Angermuller	West Germany	5 3 3 3 1	15
7	Runo Wedin	Sweden	3 3 4 1	11
8	Willihard Thomsson	Sweden	3 4 2 2	11
9	Egon Muller	West Germany	2 3 5 0	10
10	Milan Spinka	CZ	4 2 1 0	7
11	Sture Lindblom res	Sweden	3 1 1 2	7
12	Einar Egedius	Norway	1 1 3 1	6
13	Zdenek Majstr	CZ	- - 3	3
14	Berndt Hornfeldt	Sweden	1 2 0	3
15	Bent Norgaard	Denmark	0 - 2	2
16	Jon Odegard	Norway	- 0 -	0
17	Conny Samuelsson	Sweden	- 0 -	0
18	Hakan Storm	Finland	0 - -	0
	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	Q.n.s	
	Hans Utterstrom res	Sweden	d.n.r	

1974

This year, it was the turn of defending Champion Ole Olsen not to be able to do the Final defending. He had safely qualified but a broken ankle at the World Speedway Final less than 48 hours previously, saw his Final hopes gone along with the rest of the season. Hans Siegl did not ride that year and Barry Briggs went out yet again. Olsen's place was taken by reserve Edgar Stangeland from Norway, and when West Germany's Jan Kater was also unable to ride, Egon Muller stepped up from reserve to a full meeting place.

The West German track at Scheessel hosted the 1974 World Longtrack Final on Sunday afternoon, September 8. The same date as Evel Knievel sky-rocketed himself into the Snake River Canyon, Oh yes, it was that long ago!

From reserve to Champion of the World. That was the story for Egon Muller who scorched to a 30 point maximum. Only rider to offer any big fight was Alois Wiesbock who held Muller out in heat 10 before Egon swept by on the run to the flag.

Just as he had on the previous Friday night in Sweden, Ivan Mauger took the Silver Medal. Three wins and two second places, beaten only by Muller. The hugely impressive Alois Wiesbock, himself beaten only by Muller up to the Grand Final, secured the Bronze Medal despite a 5th place last time out.

World Speedway Champion, Anders Michanek finished a creditable 4th, one wonders how much Champagne had been guzzled since Friday night?! Longtrack racing was massive on the Continent, just how so? Band leader James Last was on hand to present the trophies!!! I wonder if, when watching Egon he was singing, "Fly Egon Fly" ?!

1974 World Longtrack Final 8 September Scheessel West Germany.

heat 1	Godden, Bollerup, Angermuller, Stancl, Schwarze fall, Betzl ex.
heat 2	Wiesbock, Odegard, Poschenrieder, Rosenkilde, Collins, Stangeland.
heat 3	Muller, Mauger, Michanek, Zierk, Spinka, Kubicek.
heat 4	Mauger, Poschenrieder, Godden, Rosenkilde, Hoft.
heat 5	Wiesbock, Angermuller, Collins, Michanek, Betzl, Spinka.
heat 6	Muller, Odegard, Bollerup, Kubicek, Stancl, Stangeland.
heat 7	Mauger, Godden, Collins, Angermuller, Odegard, Kubicek.
heat 8	Betzl, Michanek, Stancl, Poschenrieder, Zierk, Hoft.
heat 9	Muller, Wiesbock, Spinka, Bollerup, Rosenkilde, Broker.
Semi-Final heat 10	Muller, Wiesbock, Michanek, Angermuller, Betzl, Bollerup.
Semi-Final heat 11	Mauger, Collins, Stancl, Odegard, Poschenrieder, Godden.
Grand Final heat 12	Muller, Mauger, Michanek, Angermuller, Wiesbock, Godden.

1st	Egon Muller	West Germany	6 6 6 6 6	30
2nd	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	4 6 6 6 4	26
3rd	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	6 6 4 4 1	21
4	Anders Michanek	Sweden	3 2 4 3 3	15
5	Josef Angermuller	West Germany	3 4 2 2 2	13
6	Don Godden	England	6 3 4 0 0	13
7	Peter Collins	England	1 3 3 4	11
8	Jon Odegard	Norway	4 4 1 2	11
9	Manfred Poschenrieder	West Germany	3 4 2 1	10
10	Preben Bollerup	Denmark	4 3 2 0	9
11	Jiri Stancl	CZ	2 1 3 3	9
12	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	x 1 6 1	8
13	Preben Rosenkilde	Denmark	2 2 1	5
14	Milan Spinka	CZ	1 0 3	4
15	Hans Zierk	West Germany	2 - 1	3
16	Stanislav Kubicek	CZ	0 2 0	2
17	Cord Heinrich Hoft res	West Germany	- 1 0	1
18	Edgar Stangeland	Norway	0 0 -	0
19	Bernd Broker res	West Germany	- - 0	0
20	Gottfried Schwarze	West Germany	f - -	0
	Ole Olsen	Denmark	Q. inj. n.s	
	Jan Kater	West Germany	Q. inj. n.s	

1975

I think it would be fair enough to say that the biggest name missing from the 1975 World Longtrack Final was World number 3 Alois Wiesbock. I did read somewhere that he had been banned for 6 months after allegedly taking the place of his brother Josef in a qualifying round. That's quite a story and if true, would certainly explain his absence. 'Josef Wiesbock' did ride in the first round and scored 10 points, enough to qualify for the Semi-Finals but his name does not appear after that.

Another two stars missing were West Germans Jan Kater and Josef Angermuller. Both were eliminated from the qualifying rounds but at last, Barry Briggs made it to his second World Final. In the words of Dave Lanning, "The mighty Briggo, a track colossus" and now in his early 40's, still a force to be reckoned with. In these days of Tomasz Gollob and Greg Hancock, it's easy to appreciate how Briggs was still going strong all those years ago. [Jack Parker, Aub Lawson, Jack Biggs... need I say more?]

And at last, Ivan Mauger and Ole Olsen would meet in the Final. If either one of them, or Briggs was going to win, they would have to outscore the overwhelming, red hot favourite, Egon Muller. The defending champion was not Elton John's but a real life 'Rocket Man', with all the gold, silver and Deutschmarks to go with his Superstar lifestyle. Olsen had won the World Speedway Final just over a week before and was on that high but would it be high enough?

It was in Gornja Radgona, Yugoslavia that the 1975 World Longtrack Final was held on a sunny Sunday afternoon, September 14. The big 4 indeed turned out to be THE stars of the day, joined by the West German ace Christoph Betzl. The biggest shock of the day came when Olsen failed to score from his Semi-Final heat, spelling an end to his double dream.

As it was, Muller rose to the occasion like no other. Despite a 3rd place in round one, from then on the stage and the spotlight was all his. World Champion for the 2nd year running and likewise, Mauger forced to the Silver Medal. To be beaten only by Muller, I guess to him was no consolation. Briggs did himself proud and was right in contention in the Grand Final but a 'duck' cost him the Golden shot at Muller's Golden Goose !!!

1975 World Longtrack Final 14 September Gornja Radgona Yugoslavia.

heat 1	Betzl, Wassermann, Michanek, V. Verner, Wedin, Stancl.
heat 2	Olsen, Godden, Muller, Mauger, Collins, Praestbro.
heat 3	Briggs, Poschenrieder, Zierk, Kall, Kocuvan, Kekec.
heat 4	Mauger, Michanek, Poschenrieder, V. Verner, Zierk, Praestbro.
heat 5	Olsen, Collins, Betzl, Kocuvan, Wedin, Kekec.
heat 6	Muller, Briggs, Wassermann, Godden, Stancl, Kall.
heat 7	Briggs, Collins, Betzl, Godden, Zierk, Michanek.
heat 8	Muller, Mauger, Wassermann, Poschenrieder, Kocuvan, Wedin.
heat 9	Stancl, Olsen, V. Verner, Kall, Praestbro, Kekec.
Semi-Final heat 10	Muller, Betzl, Godden, Collins, V.Verner, Olsen.
Semi-Final heat 11	Mauger, Michanek, Briggs, Stancl, Wassermann, Poschenrieder.
Grand Final heat 12	Muller, Mauger, Olsen, Michanek, Betzl, Briggs.

1st	Egon Muller	West Germany	3 6 6 6 6	27
2nd	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	2 6 4 6 4	22
3rd	Ole Olsen	Denmark	6 6 4 0 3	19
4	Barry Briggs	New Zealand	6 4 6 3 0	19
5	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	6 3 3 4 1	17
6	Anders Michanek	Sweden	3 4 0 4 2	13
7	Hans Wassermann res	West Germany	4 3 3 1	11
8	Don Godden	England	4 2 2 3	11
9	Peter Collins	England	1 4 4 2	11
10	Manfred Poschenrieder	West Germany	4 3 2 0	9
11	Jiri Stancl	CZ	0 1 6 2	9
12	Vaclav Verner res	CZ	2 2 3 1	8
13	Hans Zierk	West Germany	3 1 1	5
14	Joachim Kall	West Germany	2 0 2	4
15	Vlado Kocuvan	Yugoslavia	1 2 1	4
16	Runo Wedin	Sweden	1 1 0	2
17	Kristian Praestbro	Denmark	0 0 1	1
18	Stefan Kekec	Yugoslavia	0 0 0	0
	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	Q.n.s	
	Edgar Stangeland	Norway	Q.n.s	

1976

The 1976 World Longtrack Final was held on September 12 at Marianske Lazne, Czechoslovakia. Just the week before, England's Peter Collins won the World Speedway Final and fans were really looking forward to seeing him go for the double. Sadly, it never happened. Collins had qualified for the Longtrack Final as reserve but got a reprieve when West Germany's Joachim Kall was unable to ride. Well, Collins never took the opportunity.

Works Jawa riders Ivan Mauger, Ole Olsen, Jiri Stancl and Zdenek Kudrna were all fitted out with brand new engines, the only way any of them were going to be able to tackle the defending Champion Egon Muller, on his Otto Lantenhammer tuned Weslake with twin carbs! And on the day, these 5 were joined by Alois Wiesbock in the Gold Medal treasure hunt.

For Muller though, it turned out to be an off day; three second places and a third put him into the Grand Final but even victory wouldn't be enough for a 3rd successive World Title. Mauger was the man in total control with 4 straight wins up to the Final. Ole Olsen with three wins and a second could still win, but he would have to win the Final with Mauger 4th or less.

The 6 Finalists lined up; Mauger with 24 points, Olsen 22, Wiesbock 17, Muller 15, Stancl 15 and Kudrna 14. The tapes went up and Wiesbock shot to the lead from Muller right behind him. Mauger blocked Olsen and Stancl with Kudrna at the back. Down the back straight, Muller overtakes Wiesbock and Olsen also takes Mauger. Kudrna falls on the second turn and into lap 2, Muller pulls clear from Wiesbock with Olsen having no answer to West Germany's masters. Mauger is happy to sit in 4th position, nursing his motor as the 2 points will give him the Gold Medal. Stancl, under orders [?] sits behind Mauger and thats the way it stays.

Muller's win secures him the Bronze Medal even though he finishes with 21 points equal with Wiesbock. A very disconsolate Olsen is third to secure 25 points, but its 1 point less than Mauger, at last taking his 3rd World Longtrack Title.

1976 World Longtrack Final 12 September Marianske Lazne Czechoslovakia.

heat 1	Wiesbock, Muller, Kudrna, Wassermann, Angermuller, Godden.
heat 2	Betzl, Olsen, Michanek, V. Verner, Briggs, Samuelsson.
heat 3	Mauger, Stancl, Duden, Sova, Stangeland, Kubicek.
heat 4	Mauger, Muller, Michanek, Godden, Samuelsson, Kubicek.
heat 5	Olsen, Stancl, Betzl, Angermuller, Wassermann, Duden.
heat 6	Wiesbock, Kudrna, V. Verner, Stangeland, Sova, Briggs ex.tapes.
heat 7	Briggs, Angermuller, Godden, Sova, Kubicek, Betzl e.f
heat 8	Mauger, Stancl, Kudrna, V. Verner, Wassermann, J. Verner.
heat 9	Olsen, Michanek, Muller, Wiesbock, Duden, Stangeland.
Semi-Final heat 10	Mauger, Muller, Wiesbock, Michanek, V. Verner, Briggs fall.
Semi-Final heat 11	Olsen, Kudrna, Stancl, Angermuller, Betzl, Godden e.f
Grand Final heat 12	Muller, Wiesbock, Olsen, Mauger, Stancl, Kudrna fall.

1st	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	6 6 6 6 2	26
2nd	Ole Olsen	Denmark	4 6 6 6 3	25
3rd	Egon Muller	West Germany	4 4 3 4 6	21
4	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	6 6 2 3 4	21
5	Jiri Stancl	CZ	4 4 4 3 1	16
6	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	3 4 3 4 f	14
7	Anders Michanek	Sweden	3 3 4 2	12
8	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	6 3 e.f 1	10
9	Josef Angermuller	West Germany	1 2 4 2	9
10	Vaclav Verner	CZ	2 3 2 1	8
11	Barry Briggs	New Zealand	1 x 6 f	7
12	Don Godden	England	0 2 3 e.f	5
13	Emil Sova res	CZ	2 1 2	5
14	Hans Wassermann	West Germany	2 1 1	4
15	Wilhelm Duden	West Germany	3 0 1	4
16	Edgar Stangeland	Norway	1 2 0	3
17	Stanislav Kubicek	CZ	0 0 1	1
18	Conny Samuelsson	Sweden	0 1 -	1
19	Jan Verner res	CZ	- - 0	0
20	Jon Odegard res	Norway	d.n.r	
	Joachim Kall	West Germany	Q.n.s	
	Peter Collins	England	Q.n.s	

1977

Tragedy struck the Speedway and Longtrack world when the popular 38 year old West German ace, Josef Angermuller was killed in April. The 4 time Longtrack Finalist held the utmost respect from both classes and would be hugely and sadly missed.

Egon Muller went into the World Final as favourite yet again. He had won both his qualifying rounds and it would be a very exciting prospect as he faced defending Champion Ivan Mauger and home favourite Ole Olsen. Mauger had recently won his 5th World Speedway Final so was revelling once again in being Master of both worlds. Olsen was desperate to make up for his World Speedway Final disaster where after blowing his final race, he was 3rd behind Mauger and Peter Collins. Collins safely qualified for the Longtrack Final but had to withdraw due to injury.

After being 'away' for a while, West Germany's Hans Siegl was back and anxious to make up for lost 'time'.

It was a bitterly cold afternoon in Denmark and the shock of the day, up to the Grand Final was the pointless Egon Muller! He led his first race and was totally the master until dramatically, his bike slowed to a halt. A duck in round two was followed by another engine failure which saw him finish the day 18th and last!!! Not a happy time for Mauger either, well out of contention. Olsen started well with two wins but then it all went wrong, with engine problems taking a toll. As it turned out, Anders Michanek, still beset by leg injuries, set himself up a favourite to win with 16 points going into the Grand Final. One more than Olsen on 15, Joachim Kall with 14, Alois Wiesbock, Hans Siegl and Jiri Stancl on 13 each. So once again, Olsen had to win and if Michanek was second, they would tie on 20 points. Any lower for Mich and Ole would take the Title. If Joachim Kall won with Olsen second, they would have 19 points each. And so the various situations went on. So to the Grand Final;

The home crowd eagerly waited for their hero to climb the Golden Staircase, BUT, it never happened! Hans Siegl stunned everyone by taking the lead and Danish Delight turned 'Swede and lovely' as Michanek tucked in behind him keeping Olsen stuck in third place! 3 laps later, Anders Michanek was Longtrack Champion of the World with a heartbroken Ole Olsen, forced yet again to suffer a Bronze Medal. Siegl was one very happy camper especially as next year's World Final would be in West Germany.

One more incredible story came from Aalborg. Jan Verner who replaced Peter Collins, was riding in his 4th straight World Speedway Final that year. He had also ridden in the World Ice Finals, World Pairs Final with Jiri Stancl and World Speedway Final. Then on September 18, he represented CZ in the World Cup Final. 5 World Finals in the same season. A world record that would never be repeated !!!

1977 World Longtrack Final 11 September Aalborg Denmark.

heat 1	Michanek, Wiesbock, Betzl, Hack, Kudrna, Lantenhammer e.f.
heat 2	Kall, Stancl, Siegl, J. Verner, Muller e.f, Wassermann ef.
heat 3	Olsen, Mauger, Praestbro, Dryml, V. Verner, Kater.
heat 4	Praestbro, Hack, Wiesbock, Siegl, Kater, Muller.
heat 5	Olsen, Michanek, Kall, Stancl, Kudrna, V. Verner.
heat 6	Betzl, Mauger, Wassermann, Lantenhammer, Dryml, J. Verner.
heat 7	Michanek, Dryml, Kall, J. Verner, Kater, Hack e.f.
heat 8	Siegl, Kudrna, Praestbro, Wassermann, Olsen, Lantenhammer e.f.
heat 9	Wiesbock, Mauger, Stancl, V. Verner, Betzl, Muller e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Hack, Stancl, Siegl, Michanek, Praestbro, Mauger.
Semi-Final heat 11	Dryml, Olsen, Kall, Kudrna, Wiesbock, Betzl.
Grand Final heat 12	Siegl, Michanek, Olsen, Stancl, Kall -, Wiesbock -.

1st	Anders Michanek	Sweden	5 4 5 2 4	20
2nd	Hans Siegl	West Germany	3 2 5 3 5	18
3rd	Ole Olsen	Denmark	5 5 1 4 3	18
4	Jiri Stancl	CZ	4 2 3 4 2	15
5	Joachim Kall	West Germany	5 3 3 3 -	14
6	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	4 3 5 1 -	13
7	Kristian Praestbro	Denmark	3 5 3 1	12
8	Ales Dryml	CZ	2 1 4 5	12
9	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	4 4 4 0	12
10	Georg Hack	West Germany	2 4 ef 5	11
11	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	3 5 1 0	9
12	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	1 1 4 2	8
13	Hans Wassermann	West Germany	ef 3 2	5
14	Jan Verner res	CZ	2 0 2	4
15	Vaclav Verner res	CZ	1 0 2	3
16	Jan Kater	West Germany	0 1 1	2
17	Otto Lantenhammer	Austria	ef 2 ef	2
18	Egon Muller	West Germany	ef 0 ef	0
	Peter Collins	England	Q. inj. n.s	
	Hans Zierk	West Germany	Q.n.s	
res	Francesco Biginato	Italy	d.n.r	
res	Lars B. Hansen	Denmark	d.n.r	

1978

And again the Longtrack world was plunged into mourning when 34 year old Hans Siegl was killed in June. Longtracks 'loveable rogue' was hugely talented and not always channelling that in the best directions, still he was a class act.

Joachim Kall failed to qualify from the Semi-Final and from the same meeting, defending World Champion Anders Michanek only got to the World Final as reserve! Seeded to the World Final was home favourite Egon Muller. England's Peter Collins, after two years of missing out, was desperate to win as he had been knocked out of the World Speedway Final. Scott Autrey became the first American to qualify. On September 2nd, he had taken the World Speedway Final Bronze Medal behind Ole Olsen and England's Gordon Kennett.

A new system was in place for this year's Longtrack Final, held at Muhldorf, West Germany on September 10. And what a shambles! It meant a 16 rider field instead of 18. And get this, Don Godden and Wilhelm Duden rode in heats 1 and 2. Ole Olsen didn't start until heat 5 by which time Mauger had already won 2 races and Autrey's first race wasn't until heat 7! "Want any carpenters for Dusseldorf?"

Never mind, a beautiful afternoon saw the sun shining on Ivan Mauger who was unbeaten after 4 rides. But successive machine problems in his last two races saw a 4th title disappear in the Muhldorf dust. Peter Collins was right behind him in the hunt for the Gold Medal. After five races, he had 3 wins and 2 seconds, both behind Mauger. In his last race heat 13, with one lap to go, he was second behind Muller which would have given him 27 points and as it turned out, making him Champion of the World. Can you imagine his heartbreak as his chain broke? And imagine the strength of character and guts it took to push home for half a lap to secure one point ?!!!

Mauger's last two races followed that disaster. What a day and that swung it over to the German aces Wiesbock and Muller. They both took full advantage of Mauger's misfortune in heat 14, then Wiesbock did it again in the last race, heat 16. Ivan could only watch as Wiesbock equalled Muller's score of 26 points.

So after a day's racing, it would take two run-offs to decide the placings. Mauger borrowed Ole Olsen's bike for the Bronze Medal showdown against Peter Collins. And he made the gate but Collins did the stalking and finally overtook a hugely disconsolate Kiwi.

The World Title decider saw Wiesbock outgate Muller but the master forced his way by and his 3rd World Title was in his handbag!

1978 World Longtrack Final 10 September Muhldorf West Germany.

heat 1	Collins, Hack, Stancl, Dryml, Godden, Duden.
heat 2	Mauger, Muller, Praestbro, Duden, Godden, J. Verner.
heat 3	Maier, Hack, Muller, Dryml, Praestbro, Kudrna.
heat 4	Mauger, Collins, J. Verner, Maier, Kudrna, Stancl e.f.
heat 5	Mauger, Collins, Olsen, Hack, Praestbro, Jirout.
heat 6	Wiesbock, Stancl, Duden, Jirout, Kudrna, Praestbro.
heat 7	Collins, Muller, Olsen, Autrey, Kudrna, Duden e.f.
heat 8	Collins, Wiesbock, Praestbro, Autrey, J. Verner, Dryml.
heat 9	Olsen, Wiesbock, Maier, J. Verner, Hack, Duden e.f.
heat 10	Mauger, Maier, Jirout, Dryml, Lantenhammer, Autrey ex. tapes
heat 11	Muller, Olsen, Stancl, J. Verner, Dryml, Jirout e.f
heat 12	Autrey, Olsen, Maier, Godden, Praestbro, Stancl n.s.
heat 13	Muller, Wiesbock, Jirout, Godden, Collins [push], Maier e.f.
heat 14	Muller, Wiesbock, Hack, Mauger, Stancl, Autrey.
heat 15	Hack, Jirout, Kudrna, Godden, J. Verner, Autrey e.f.
heat 16	Wiesbock, Olsen, Dryml, Mauger, Kudrna, Godden.
Bronze Medal Run-off	Collins, Mauger.
Gold Medal Run-off	Muller, Wiesbock.

1st	Egon Muller	West Germany	4 3 4 5 5 5	26
2nd	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	5 4 4 4 4 5	26
3rd	Peter Collins	England	5 4 4 5 5 1	24
4	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	5 5 5 5 2 2	24
5	Ole Olsen	Denmark	3 3 5 4 4 4	23
6	Georg Hack	West Germany	4 4 2 1 3 5	19
7	Karl Maier	West Germany	5 2 3 4 3 ef	17
8	Jiri Jirout	CZ	0 2 3 ef 3 4	12
9	Jiri Stancl	CZ	3 ef 4 3 ns 1	11
10	Ales Dryml	CZ	2 2 0 2 1 3	10
11	Scott Autrey	USA	2 2 xt 5 0 ef	9
12	Kristian Praestbro	Denmark	3 1 1 0 3 1	9
13	Jan Verner	CZ	0 3 1 2 2 1	9
14	Don Godden	England	1 1 2 2 2 0	8
15	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	0 1 1 1 3 1	7
16	Wilhelm Duden	West Germany	0 2 3 ef ef ns	5
res	Otto Lantenhammer	Austria	- - - - 1 -	1
res	Anders Michanek	Sweden	d.n.r	

1979

Thankfully, the previous year's disastrous World Final format was discarded for the tried and true. And the Final returned to Marianske Lazne in Czechoslovakia where on September 9, over 25,000 spectators got to see an amazing battle of wits and nerves between two of the decades biggest Superstars. Anders Michanek and Alois Wiesbock swept all before them, beating each other once each to go into the Grand Final with 19 points each.

Such was their dominance that only one of their opponents had the remotest chance of glimpsing the Gold Medal. Ole Olsen went into the Final with 14 points so if he won and the 'big two' failed to score, they would all have 19. The other 3 Finalists, Jiri Stancl, Georg Hack and Karl Maier all had 13 points. So, a thrilling climax captivated the audience as indeed, Olsen won to secure the Bronze Medal, but all eyes on the favourites and Wiesbock it was, finishing 4th holding Michanek to 5th place and at last, becoming Longtrack Champion of the World !!!

Olsen again was forced to be satisfied just being on the podium while pre meeting favourites Egon Muller, World Speedway Champion for the 6th time Ivan Mauger and Peter Collins all had days to forget.

And so the decade ended with 3 Titles each for Mauger and Muller. One each for Olsen, Michanek and Wiesbock. With a special mention for Peter Collins, but for a broken chain. We eagerly awaited the new decade with new stars ready and able to topple the old guard.

1979 World Longtrack Final 9 September Marianske Lazne Czechoslovakia.

heat 1	Wiesbock, Michanek, Praestbro, Hack, Mauger, Biginato.
heat 2	Muller, Maier, Betzl, Olsen, Kudrna, Lee.
heat 3	Dryml, Stancl, Collins, Busk, Duden, Grubmuller.
heat 4	Olsen, Hack, Duden, Dryml, Kudrna, Praestbro.
heat 5	Michanek, Wiesbock, Lee, Betzl, Grubmuller, Busk.
heat 6	Maier, Muller, Stancl, Collins, Mauger, Biginato.
heat 7	Wiesbock, Praestbro, Stancl, Maier, Betzl, Dryml e.f.
heat 8	Michanek, Olsen, Muller, Duden, Biginato, Grubmuller.
heat 9	Mauger, Lee, Hack, Collins, Busk, Kudrna.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wiesbock, Praestbro, Olsen, Maier, Dryml, Collins.
Semi-Final heat 11	Michanek, Hack, Stancl, Lee, Mauger, Muller.
Grand Final heat 12	Olsen, Stancl, Hack, Wiesbock, Michanek, Maier.

1st	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	5 4 5 5 2	21
2nd	Anders Michanek	Sweden	4 5 5 5 1	20
3rd	Ole Olsen	Denmark	2 5 4 3 5	19
4	Jiri Stancl	CZ	4 3 3 3 4	17
5	Georg Hack	West Germany	2 4 3 4 3	16
6	Karl Maier	West Germany	4 5 2 2 0	13
7	Egon Muller	West Germany	5 4 3 0	12
8	Kristian Praestbro	Denmark	3 0 4 4	11
9	Mike Lee	England	0 3 4 2	9
10	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	1 1 5 1	8
11	Ales Dryml	CZ	5 2 ef 1	8
12	Peter Collins	England	3 2 2 0	7
13	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	3 2 1	6
14	Wihelm Duden	West Germany	1 3 2	6
15	Alf Busk	Denmark	2 0 1	3
16	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	1 1 0	2
17	Francesco Biginato	Italy	0 0 1	1
18	Walter Grubmuller	West Germany	0 1 0	1
res	Heinrich Sprenger	West Germany	d.n.r	
res	Josef Aigner	West Germany	d.n.r	

1980

A new decade, a new Champion! The 1980 World Longtrack Final was held at Scheesel, West Germany on the 14th of September. The rain sodden track made for hugely difficult conditions but despite the mud, it couldn't stop a German white-wash!

Their 7 representatives, at the end of the day filled the top 7 places. Karl Maier took the Gold Medal 5 points clear of Egon Muller. His only slip of the day, a 3rd behind Wiesbock and Muller in round two. For the defender Wiesbock, he went into the Grand Final with 18 points equal with Maier but a duck, to suit the conditions, sunk him to 3rd place overall. It was after the podium ceremony that Wiesbock's motor was found to be oversize, not by much, but he was made an example of and stripped of his Bronze Medal. As Josef Aigner and Christoph Betzl had 16 points each, they were each awarded 3rd place and Bronze Medals.

The 'best of the rest'? Ivan Mauger, at 40 years of age with a career of rain experience to call on, heading CZ hardman Zdenek Kudrna, Ole Olsen and the new World Speedway Champion, Mike Lee.

A nightmare of a day for Anders Michanek but he wasn't finished quite yet ! Speedway's 'Crown Prince', Bruce Penhall from America had done well to qualify but here, he really was a fish out of water. And besides, he only rode Longtrack to help him keep 'an edge'. He had certainly learnt from The Masters!

1980 World Longtrack Final 14 September Scheesel West Germany.

heat 1	Muller, Duden, Stancl, Michanek, Olsen, Morton.
heat 2	Maier, Wiesbock, Aigner, Lee, Kudrna, Hack.
heat 3	Mauger, Betzl, Collins, Spinka, Koning, Penhall e.f.
heat 4	Wiesbock, Muller, Maier, Duden, Collins, Penhall.
heat 5	Hack, Olsen, Aigner, Koning, Morton, Mauger e.f.
heat 6	Betzl, Kudrna, Lee, Spinka, Stancl e.f, Michanek e.f.
heat 7	Aigner, Muller, Olsen, Kudrna, Betzl, Penhall.
heat 8	Maier, Morton, Collins, Lee, Michanek e.f, Koning e.f.
heat 9	Wiesbock, Hack, Stancl, Mauger, Spinka, Duden e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Duden, Wiesbock, Betzl, Mauger, Aigner, Collins.
Semi-Final heat 11	Maier, Hack, Muller, Kudrna, Lee, Olsen.
Grand Final heat 12	Maier, Aigner, Betzl, Muller, Hack, Wiesbock.

1st	Karl Maier	West Germany	5 3 5 5 5	23
2nd	Egon Muller	West Germany	5 4 4 3 2	18
3rd	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	4 5 5 4 0	18 Disqualified.
3rd =	Josef Aigner	West Germany	3 3 5 1 4	16
3rd =	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	4 5 1 3 3	16
6	Georg Hack	West Germany	f 5 4 4 1	14
7	Wilhelm Duden	West Germany	4 2 ef 5	11
8	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	5 ef 2 2	9
9	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	1 4 2 2	9
10	Ole Olsen	Denmark	1 4 3 0	8
11	Mike Lee	England	2 3 2 1	8
12	Peter Collins	England	3 1 3 0	7
13	Jiri Stancl	CZ	3 ef 3	6
14	Chris Morton	England	0 1 4	5
15	Milan Spinka	CZ	2 2 1	5
16	Fritz Koning	Netherlands	1 2 ef	3
17	Anders Michanek	Sweden	2 ef ef	2
18	Bruce Penhall	USA	ef 0 0	0
res	Erik Pedersen	Denmark	d.n.r	
res	Kai Niemi	Finland	d.n.r	

1981

Biggest names missing from this year's World Longtrack Final were Ole Olsen who had taken the World Speedway Final Silver Medal, fellow Dane Kristian Praestbro and American Bobby Schwartz. They all failed to qualify from the Semi-Finals. World Final reserves were British Speedway Champion Steve Bastable and the World Speedway Champion, the USA's Bruce Penhall. Peter Collins was joined in the Final by his younger brother Phil, not the drummer but certainly on the beat!

Gornja Radgona, Yugoslavia hosted The 1981 World Longtrack Final on September 20. Big news from the qualifying heats was the failure of defending Champion Karl Maier to make any impression, Alois Wiesbock with a bike that wouldn't go but the biggest was the horrific heat 7 crash that put Ivan Mauger in hospital. Georg Gilgenreiner led down the back straight of the first lap chased by Josef Aigner. Mauger rode up alongside Aigner who suddenly turned left. The two connected with Mauger's right foot getting caught in Aigner's back wheel. Both went flying as Stefan Kecec from the host country dived to the infield to avoid the carnage. Mauger's injuries were among the worst of his career, broken leg, ankle, foot and all right toes broken! Needless to say, the 41 year olds season was ended then and there! Aigner was able to make the re-start and complete the meeting.

Aiming for the Gold Medal as the meeting progressed were Christoph Betzl who led the scorers into the Grand Final with 19 points. He was beaten only by Mike Lee. The Brit had 18, beaten only in his first race by Egon Muller and Phil Collins. And Lee had been ever so lucky in his last heat as he shot across the starting tape, being able to pull back without it breaking. Evergreen Anders Michanek was still up there with 16, Gilgenreiner 15 and Muller 14. Making a very impressive debut was Phil Collins who made up the Final 6, himself scoring 14.

So Betzl was 3 laps away from the World Title. If Lee won and Betzl was second, they would tie on 23 points. Any of the others all had hope if something untoward should happen. They all came into line for the Grand Final and as the tape went up, so did Betz ! That one disastrous split second may have cost him the Title as he reared up and was last into the first turn. Then he was blasted by shale that put him even further behind. Gilgenreiner made the gate and held off the persistent challenges of Lee for the first lap. A blanket covered the pair until Lee had the horsepower to overtake on the second lap. Once clear he was Gone for Gold ! Gilgenreiner kept second with Michanek third as a heartbroken Betzl was only able to catch Collins.

So Mike Lee became England's first World Longtrack Champion. In doing so, joining Don Godden as the only Poms to win Longtrack's premier event. [Godden, European Champion 1969]

Betzl's one point gave him the Silver Medal but it was ever-so hard to force a smile for the cameras! And the Mighty Mich won the Bronze Medal run-off to complete a very satisfying afternoon. As the car-sticker says, "Mitch is Magic" ...

1981 World Longtrack Final 20 September Gornja Radgona Yugoslavia.

heat 1	Betzl, Mauger, Peter Collins, Hack, Stancl, Kocuvan.
heat 2	Otto Pingel, Michanek, Aigner, Kudrna, Wiesbock, e.f, Duden e.f.
heat 3	Muller, Phil Collins, Lee, Maier, Gilgenreiner, Kekec.
heat 4	Gilgenreiner, Michanek, Muller, Peter Collins, Wiesbock, Hack.
heat 5	Phil Collins, Aigner, Stancl, Mauger, Maier, Duden.
heat 6	Lee, Betzl, Otto Pingel, Kudrna, Kekec, Kocuvan.
heat 7	re-run; Gilgenreiner, Aigner, Peter Collins, Kekec, Kudrna n.s, Mauger n.s.
heat 8	Betzl, Otto Pingel, Muller, Phil Collins, Stancl, Wiesbock e.f.
heat 9	Lee, Michanek, Hack, Maier, Kocuvan, Duden e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Betzl, Gilgenreiner, Muller, Peter Collins, Hack e.f, Otto Pingel e.f.
Semi-Final heat 11	Lee, Michanek, Phil Collins, Aigner, Stancl. Mauger injured n.s.
Grand Final heat 12	Lee, Gilgenreiner, Michanek, Muller, Betzl, Phil Collins.
Bronze Medal Run-off	Michanek, Gilgenreiner

1st	Mike Lee	England	3 5 5 5 5	23
2nd	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	5 4 5 5 1	20
3rd	Anders Michanek	Sweden	4 4 4 4 3	19
4	Georg Gilgenreiner	West Germany	1 5 5 4 4	19
5	Egon Muller	West Germany	5 3 3 3 2	16
6	Phil Collins	England	4 5 2 3 0	14
7	Josef Aigner	West Germany	3 4 4 2	13
8	Hans Otto Pingel	West Germany	5 3 4 e.f	12
9	Peter Collins	England	3 2 3 2	10
10	Jiri Stancl	CZ	1 3 1 1	6
11	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	4 2 n.s n.s	6
12	Georg Hack	West Germany	2 0 3 e.f	5
13	Karl Maier	West Germany	2 1 2	5
14	Zdenek Kudrna	CZ	2 2 n.s	4
15	Stefan Kekec	Yugoslavia	0 1 2	3
16	Vlado Kocuvan	Yugoslavia	0 0 1	1
17	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	ef 1 ef	1
18	Wilhelm Duden	West Germany	ef 0 ef	0
res	Steve Bastable	England	d.n.r	
res	Bruce Penhall	USA	d.n.r	

1982

The World Final returned to Denmark and on the 19th of September at the Korsko Motor Centre, Esbjerg, a galaxy of Stars lined up on a cold and foggy afternoon to battle for Longtrack's ultimate prize. Sadly, the brightest star missing was the defending Champion, Mike Lee. In May, he had safely qualified for the Semi-Finals after finishing 2nd to Denmark's Hans Nielsen at Marianske Laszne. But that was the end of his competition. No-one knew it of course but Lee would never ride in the World Longtrack Final again. A 'tortured genius' whose mistakes in life cost him dearly!

Despite the conditions, the meeting got underway and at one stage, officials had to stand on the corners to help the referee who couldn't see through the fog! Making up for last year, Karl Maier and Alois Wiesbock went into the Grand Final as the favourites. Peter Collins had been the only rider to beat Maier. Egon Muller the only one to beat Wiesbock. So with 19 points each, whoever won would take their second Crown. Muller was still in contention with 17, Peter Collins 15, the amazing Ivan Mauger with 13 and Georg Gilgenreiner also with 13.

With the fog making life ever so difficult, the start was going to be vital. And Maier proved the 'Master of the Starter' and led to the first turn with Gilgenreiner beside him, then Mauger with Wiesbock on the outside. Muller was behind on the inside with Peter Collins out of it at the back.

Maier was in total control from start to finish but Muller put it over Wiesbock for 2nd place. That meant once again, Medal domination for the Germans. Special mention has to go to Ivan Mauger. After last year's shocking injuries, he could have easily called it a day. But to continue his Longtrack career and at 42, not just make it to the World Final but to make the last 6 was nothing short of 'Batman' stuff !!! And he hadn't quite finished yet, "Gazooks..."

1982 World Longtrack Final 19 September Esbjerg Denmark.

heat 1	Wiesbock, Wigg, Stancl, Hack, Gerhard, Morton.
heat 2	Mauger, Schwartz, Olsen, Aigner, Betzl, Nielsen.
heat 3	Peter Collins, Maier, Muller, Michanek, Gilgenreiner, Phil Collins.
heat 4	Wiesbock, Muller, Peter Collins, Betzl, Wigg, Schwartz.
heat 5	Maier, Gerhard, Nielsen, Morton, Aigner, Phil Collins.
heat 6	Gilgenreiner, Olsen, Hack, Michanek, Mauger, Stancl.
heat 7	Muller, Nielsen, Michanek, Olsen, Gerhard, Wigg e.f.
heat 8	Maier, Peter Collins, Mauger, Morton, Stancl, Schwartz f/ex.
heat 9	Wiesbock, Gilgenreiner, Betzl, Hack, Aigner, Phil Collins e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Muller, Wiesbock, Gilgenreiner, Michanek, Nielsen, Gerhard.
Semi-Final heat 11	Maier, Mauger, Peter Collins, Olsen, Betzl, Hack.
Grand Final heat 12	Maier, Muller, Wiesbock, Gilgenreiner, Mauger, Peter Collins.

1st	Karl Maier	West Germany	4 5 5 5 5	24
2nd	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	5 5 5 4 3	22
3rd	Egon Muller	West Germany	3 4 5 5 4	21
4	Georg Gilgenreiner	West Germany	1 5 4 3 2	15
5	Peter Collins	England	5 3 4 3 0	15
6	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	5 1 3 4 1	14
7	Ole Olsen	Denmark	3 4 2 2	11
8	Anders Michanek	Sweden	2 2 3 2	9
9	Hans Nielsen	Denmark	0 3 4 1	8
10	Christoph Betzl	West Germany	1 2 3 1	7
11	Georg Hack	West Germany	2 3 2 0	7
12	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	1 4 1 0	6
13	Simon Wigg	England	4 1 ef	5
14	Chris Morton	England	0 2 2	4
15	Josef Aigner	West Germany	2 1 1	4
16	Bobby Schwartz	USA	4 0 f/ex	4
17	Jiri Stancl	CZ	3 0 1	4
18	Phil Collins	England	0 0 ef	0
res	Hans Otto Pingel	West Germany	d.n.r	
res	Petr Ondrasik	CZ	d.n.r	

1983

Good to see Mike Lee back in the competition and a third place in Round Three behind Egon Muller and Hans Otto Pingel put him safely through to the Semi Finals. Not such hot going for Chris Morton and Phil Collins. Lee then made it to the World Final as reserve but failing to qualify included Anders Michanek, Peter Collins, Georg Gilgenreiner and Josef Aigner.

The Collins family remained represented however as Les made his debut. The previous year, Les had taken the World Speedway Final Silver Medal behind American Bruce Penhall. And on the night, he had been the only rider to beat Speedway's Golden Eagle! [Who within an hour became Speedway's lame duck as he quit on the spot !!!] It never rains in California !?

Riding for the first time in the competition was young American, 21 year old Shawn Moran, already a Speedway hot-shot, he went all the way to make his World Final debut. However his dreams appeared shattered along with his left leg, after a speedway crash in London. But friends came to the rescue and he was "kidnapped" from hospital and driven to Scotland [!!!] to see the 'Speedway Miracle Man', Doctor Carlo Biagi. Moran told the story, "Biagi operated and gave me a note for the track Doctor to say I was fit enough to ride!" And ride he did;

The 1983 World Longtrack Final was held on a cloudy afternoon at Marianske Laszne, Czechoslovakia on September 18. And Moran won his debut heat showing no ill effects of his broken leg. The qualifying heats showed that this was not going to be German walkover. After 3 rides each, Moran had dropped just one point to Wiesbock, who also had 14 points beaten only by Jiri Stancl. The Czech had 13 while Maier was on twelve.

So to the Semi-Final heats where the Dane, Finn Rune Jensen shot himself to contention by winning as Maier and Wiesbock alarmingly dropped too many points. Then Moran took another 5 points as Ivan Mauger did him a huge favour by beating Stancl and on the last bend, taking Ales Dryml to a photo finish and taking the second place! It certainly was an amazing piece of riding by the 43 year old Grand Master.

The 6 Grand Finalists were Moran on 19 points, Jensen with 16, Stancl and Wiesbock on 15, Maier 14 and Dryml 12. Home fans were delighted as Stancl made the gate but Moran tucked in behind him as Jensen was out of it! Stancl extended his lead and on the last lap, Maier overtook Moran. That secured a Bronze Medal for the defender and Stancl was a clear winner, those 5 points giving him the Silver but all eyes were on Shawn Moran whose third place, saw him become Longtrack Champion of the World !!! A truly amazing performance and riding a GR500, the creation of Longtrack master, Don Godden.

Mike Lee never got to ride and who knows what he could have done especially as he was on a high, [a legal one] after finishing 3rd in the World Speedway Final just a couple of weeks earlier. It was also the last Longtrack Final for Ole Olsen, who retired at the end of the year. Rather surprisingly, he had won this World Title only once but that was enough, he was truly one of Speedway and Longtrack's true Legends.

1983 was the year of being the wrong way round. A speedway rider won the World Longtrack Final and a longtrack rider won the World Speedway Final. Egon Muller had won the Speedway Final at Norden, West Germany but on a tailor made track, on a bike so clearly 20ks faster than any other that day, the less said about that fiasco the better!

1983 World Longtrack Final 18 September Marianske Laszne Czechoslovakia.

heat 1	Moran, Hack, Dryml, Jensen, Olsen, Diener e.f.
heat 2	Maier, Wigg, Muller, Nielsen, Titman, Schwartz e.f.
heat 3	Stancl, Wiesbock, Mauger, Otto Pingel, Gerhard, Les Collins.
heat 4	Wiesbock, Moran, Muller, Schwartz, Olsen, Les Collins.
heat 5	Jensen, Stancl, Titman, Gerhard, Diener, Nielsen e.f.
heat 6	Wigg, Hack, Dryml, Maier, Mauger, Otto Pingel.
heat 7	Maier, Jensen, Les Collins, Titman, Olsen, Otto Pingel.
heat 8	Wiesbock, Stancl, Dryml, Wigg, Muller, Diener.
heat 9	Moran, Nielsen, Mauger, Schwartz, Hack, Gerhard fall.
Semi-Final heat 10	Jensen, Muller, Titman, Maier, Wiesbock, Hack.
Semi-Final heat 11	Moran, Mauger, Dryml, Stancl, Nielsen, Wigg.
Grand Final heat 12	Stancl, Maier, Moran, Dryml, Wiesbock, Jensen.

1st	Shawn Moran	USA	5 4 5 5 3	22
2nd	Jiri Stancl	CZ	5 4 4 2 5	20
3rd	Karl Maier	West Germany	5 2 5 2 4	18
4	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	4 5 5 1 1	16
5	Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	2 5 4 5 0	16
6	Ales Dryml	CZ	3 3 3 3 2	14
7	Simon Wigg	England	4 5 2 0	11
8	Egon Muller	West Germany	3 3 1 4	11
9	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	3 1 3 4	11
10	Georg Hack	West Germany	4 4 1 0	9
11	John Titman	Australia	1 3 2 3	9
12	Hans Nielsen	Denmark	2 ef 4 1	7
13	Bobby Schwartz	USA	ef 2 2	4
14	Ole Olsen	Denmark	1 1 1	3
15	Les Collins	England	0 0 3	3
16	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	1 2 f	3
17	Hans Otto Pingel	West Germany	2 0 0	2
18	Heinrich Diener	West Germany	ef 1 0	1
res	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	d.n.r	
res	Mike Lee	England	d.n.r	

1984

Could history repeat itself? 24 year old speedway Top-Gun, Erik Gundersen from Denmark went on to win the World Speedway Final in 1984 and that year, he entered the World Longtrack Championship for the first time. Winning his Semi-Final, he was set for his World Final debut. Not a happy time however for Brits Mike Lee and Simon Wigg, both going out in their first rounds. Anders Michanek did the same while Chris Morton said goodbye at the Semi-Final. Alois Wiesbock unable to ride in the competition due to injury.

The 1984 World Longtrack Final was hosted at Herxheim, West Germany on September 16. Overnight rain had made conditions very tricky and it wasn't the brightest of afternoons. The drama kicked off from the first heat. Defending Champion Shawn Moran started the day with an engine failure and things never got any better.

The explosive heat two is a You-Tube sensation. As the rain came down, Collins was left at the start as Muller gated over Finland's Kai Niemi. But onto lap two and Collins came charging around the outside of Niemi and began stalking Muller. He then dived to the inside and got beside Muller, taking him out and forcing the Grand Master off the track, onto the outside grass. To the delight of the crowd, he repeated that move on the next turn. For the last lap, Collins opened up a lead Muller had no answer to. The horns and claxons greeted a magnificent piece of Longtrack expertise.

Then debut boy Gundersen won his first two heats back to back, downing Muller in the process. Karl Maier had to work hard in heat 6, left at the start he had his fans screaming as he fought through the pack to close up on race leader Collins. And he almost made it but Collins held on to win by a length.

Then in heat 7, Moran gated over Australia's John Titman with Collins last away. But more bike problems saw the Young American slip back to third as Collins made his way to second but a long way behind Titman. Gundersen dropped his first point to Maier in heat 8 but again forced Muller to dodge his dirt.

The biggest drama of the day came in the Semi-Final heat 10. Ales Dryml who after 2 pointless heats, had won heat 9. The CZ star gated and led Maier for the whole race. Then on the very last turn, Maier got a face full of dirt that blinded him and rode completely off the track! This meant instant exclusion and his Title dreams were left splattered in the mud.

Gundersen easily won Semi-Final heat 11 but all eyes were on Collins who was yet again, made to work from the back but a 4th place put him in dire straits. Money for nothing? Maybe on Tyneside!

The clear leader for the Grand Final was Gundersen with 19 points. Collins had 16, Maier 14, Muller 14, Finn Rune Jensen 14 and Gerd Riss on his World Final debut with 12. So Gundersen could drop points but no-one else had that luxury.

The 6 lined up with Collins on grid 2. The drama continued as under starter's orders, Collins jumped the start ! He didn't break the tape but both wheels went over the line and he was OUT ! Collins was gutted, the crowd didn't like it but rules are rules. As Collins dejectedly rode away, Muller made the gate from Gundersen and Maier. That's the way it stayed so yes, history was repeated as Erik Gundersen became World Longtrack Champion at his first attempt. Muller's win gave him the Silver Medal and a heartbroken Maier was forced to accept the Bronze. A sodden afternoon in more ways than one!

Gundersen joined Ivan Mauger as the only riders to win the World Speedway Final and World Longtrack Final in the same season. And of course, they joined Bjorn Knutson as the only riders to win both sports Premier events the same year. And what about Egon Muller? World Champion in 1974, Silver Medalist in 1984! And the 35 year old Triple Champion was far from finished...

1984 World Longtrack Final 16 September Herxheim West Germany.

heat 1	Maier, Jensen, Otto Pingel, Doncaster, Les Collins, Moran e.f.
heat 2	Peter Collins, Muller, Stancl, Niemi, Aigner, Dryml.
heat 3	Gundersen, Gerhard, Riss, Nielsen, Mauger, Titman.
heat 4	Gundersen, Muller, Titman, Doncaster, Les Collins, Dryml.
heat 5	Jensen, Nielsen, Stancl, Aigner, Riss, Moran.
heat 6	Peter Collins, Maier, Mauger, Gerhard, Otto Pingel, Niemi.
heat 7	Titman, Peter Collins, Moran, Les Collins, Gerhard, Stancl e.f.
heat 8	Maier, Gundersen, Muller, Niemi, Jensen, Nielsen e.f.
heat 9	Dryml, Riss, Doncaster, Aigner, Mauger, Otto Pingel e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Dryml, Jensen, Muller, Gerhard, Maier ex. Doncaster e.f.
Semi-Final heat 11	Gundersen, Riss, Stancl, Peter Collins, Nielsen, Titman e.f.
Grand Final heat 12	Muller, Gundersen, Maier, Jensen, Riss, Peter Collins ex. tape.

1st Erik Gundersen	Denmark	5 5 4 5 4	23
2nd Egon Muller	West Germany	4 4 3 3 5	19
3rd Karl Maier	West Germany	5 4 5 x 3	17
4 Peter Collins	England	5 5 4 2 x	16
5 Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	4 5 1 4 2	16
6 Gerd Riss	West Germany	3 1 4 4 1	13
7 Ales Dryml	CZ	0 0 5 5	10
8 Jiri Stancl	CZ	3 3 ef 3	9
9 Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	4 2 1 2	9
10 John Titman	Australia	0 3 5 ef	8
11 Jeremy Doncaster	England	2 2 3 ef	7
12 Hans Nielsen	Denmark	2 4 ef 1	7
13 Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	1 3 1	5
14 Josef Aigner	West Germany	1 2 2	5
15 Hans Otto Pingel	West Germany	3 1 ef	4
16 Kai Niemi	Finland	2 0 2	4
17 Les Collins	England	1 1 2	4
18 Shawn Moran	USA	ef 0 3	3
res Bo Petersen	Denmark	d.n.r	
res Gunter Bunning	West Germany	d.n.r	

1985

Before a wheel has turned in this year's competition, former Champion Mike Lee is out of the hunt. In the previous year, he had got into rather a spot of bother with officialdom. The result ? A five year ban! This was reduced to one year but Mike never recovered from that and his career, certainly in the World Longtrack Championship was tragically over.

Simon Wigg, himself in hot water and banned from the World Speedway Championship, won his first round from Alois Wiesbock and Ales Dryml. Not a happy day however for Anders Michanek, the former World Champion failing to qualify and saying a final farewell to the competition stage that he had graced so well!!!

Then in July, huge dramas from the Semi-Finals. Firstly, defending Champion Erik Gundersen crashed in practice and was unable to ride. Then on the day, Karl Maier was sensationally knocked out. Bernd Diener and Maier had enough points to qualify but fellow Germans Hack, Riss and Heinrich Diener scored more than they did. This meant that only the top 3 scorers from any country could go through! Oh yes, it was the 80s!!! And the World Final lost one its hottest favourites.

On the same day, Hans Otto Pingel and Hans Nielsen went out from their Semis. A month later, Erik Gundersen won his second straight World Speedway Final and he may have thought that he would be seeded to the Longtrack Final to be held in Denmark. Certainly the programme writers thought so as Gundersen appears in the programme as Number 8. But, it was not to be. The Danes decided to seed Finn Rune Jensen instead. Technically, it may have been the correct decision but one cannot help but feel that the World Final was robbed of its most shining star. Further history would back that up!

So to the World Longtrack Final itself, held on 15 September, at the Korsko Motor Centre, Esbjerg, Denmark. And it rained, surprise, surprise! The clouds did break up eventually but it was another cold afternoon.

Egon Muller however was cooking! Two straight wins was followed by a second to Shawn Moran. That gave Muller 14 points. Jiri Stancl was beaten only by Muller and Simon Wigg so he had 13 followed by Wigg, Peter Collins, Moran and Bobby Schwartz, all on 12.

The first Semi-Final saw Schwartz make it to the first turn ahead of the pack but Wigg took the lead on the back straight and Gerd Riss got into second place. Heartbreak for Muller however, not quick enough and very quickly filled in.

Same situation for Stancl in the next race. Moran hit the front from England's Martin Hagon and Peter Collins. That's the way it stayed which made for an extremely close Grand Final. Wigg and Moran had 17 points. Muller, Stancl, Collins and Schwartz all on 15 !!!

From the gate, Wigg blasted to the first turn from Schwartz with Muller and Moran not quick enough. Stancl and Collins tussled for 3rd but Wigg was a 'Gone Burger'. Heartbreak for Bobby Schwartz whose engine failed on the second lap, costing him the Silver Medal. Simon Wigg became England's Super Hero taking the Gold Medal as Stancl held on for the Silver and Peter Collins, once more on the podium with the Bronze Medal. A shattering end for Moran and Muller but I think Schwartz would have been the most gutted!

Riding for the last time in the World Final was 45 year old Ivan Mauger. It was his 14th appearance, same as his number of World Speedway Finals. The Triple Champion could certainly hold his head high and ride off into the sunset to enjoy his retirement and family in anonymity on a sandy beach far, far away...

1985 World Longtrack Final 15 September Esbjerg Denmark.

heat 1	Peter Collins, Schwartz, Doncaster, Moran, Dryml, Gerhard fall.
heat 2	Hagon, Lausch, Mauger, Hack, Jensen, Diener.
heat 3	Muller, Stancl, Wigg, Verner, Ondrasik, Riss e.f.
heat 4	Stancl, Doncaster, Schwartz, Verner, Jensen, Hagon.
heat 5	Muller, Peter Collins, Hack, Ondrasik, Dryml, Diener.
heat 6	Moran, Wigg, Riss, Jacobsen, Mauger, Lausch.
heat 7	Wigg, Stancl, Peter Collins, Hack, Lausch, Doncaster e.f.
heat 8	Moran, Muller, Hagon, Dryml, Verner, Mauger.
heat 9	Schwartz, Riss, Jensen, Diener, Ondrasik, Morton e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wigg, Riss, Schwartz, Doncaster, Muller, Jensen.
Semi-Final heat 11	Moran, Hagon, Peter Collins, Stancl, Lausch, Hack.
Grand Final heat 12	Wigg, Stancl, Peter Collins, Muller, Schwartz e.f , Moran e.f.

1st	Simon Wigg	England	3 4 5 5 5	22
2nd	Jiri Stancl	CZ	4 5 4 2 4	19
3rd	Peter Collins	England	5 4 3 3 3	18
4	Shawn Moran	USA	2 5 5 5 ef	17
5	Egon Muller	West Germany	5 5 4 1 2	17
6	Bobby Schwartz	USA	4 3 5 3 ef	15
7	Martin Hagon	England	5 0 3 4	12
8	Gerd Riss	West Germany	ef 3 4 4	11
9	Jeremy Doncaster	England	3 4 ef 2	9
10	Georg Hack	West Germany	2 3 2 0	7
11	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	4 0 1 1	6
12	Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	1 1 3 0	5
13	Vaclav Verner	CZ	2 2 1	5
14	Ales Dryml	CZ	1 1 2	4
15	Ivan Mauger	New Zealand	3 1 0	4
16	Peter Ondrasik	CZ	1 2 1	4
17	Heinrich Diener	West Germany	0 0 2	2
18	Brian Jacobsen res	Denmark	- 2 -	2
19	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	f - -	0
20	Chris Morton res	England	- - ef	0

1986

After 13 straight years, the World Longtrack Final would be run without Egon Muller. Not a happy day at the Semi-Finals saw the Triple Champion eliminated but that was not the biggest news; Defending World Champion Simon Wigg also said goodbye to his Title dreams. Same day, different venue, West Germany's Klaus Lausch was a victim of the '3 riders per country' rule. England's Chris Morton and Jeremy Doncaster also went home with no ticket to ride.

On the 30th of August, Hans Nielsen from Denmark won the World Speedway Final, dropping just one point to defending Champion Erik Gundersen. Hans was eager to add this World Title to his collection but not as eager as Gundersen. After missing out on riding in last year's Longtrack Final and making a hash of this year's World Speedway Final, 'Erik the Viking' was in withdrawal for Danish Delight.

The 1986 World Longtrack Final was held on September 14 at Pfarrkirchen, West Germany. A beautiful afternoon in the beautiful West German countryside. And for Erik Gundersen, it was a beautiful day! Quite simply in a class of his own with the score accurately portraying his dominance. His GM motor as sweet as it had been two years earlier.

Nielsen started with a win over Maier but his much anticipated showdown with Gundersen never eventuated as Hans was busted for busting the tapes! Another win followed but he was undone by Gerd Riss in the Semi-Final and an engine failure in the Grand Final knocked his stuffing out. Peter Collins, despite not winning one programmed heat, battled away and was rewarded with the Silver Medal.

In the Grand Final, with Gundersen a mile clear, Marcel Gerhard was in second place with Riss third and Collins watching it all. Then in a dramatic sequence, Riss dropped out with an engine failure and on the last turn, Collins took Gerhard. This saw the pair on 18 points each. In the Silver Medal run-off, again Collins came from the back but it was a titanic effort that did not sink with both riders giving the crowd extra value for frankfurters!

The Grand Final engine failure may have cost Riss the Silver Medal but his time was still to come. Alois Wiesbock who had won both his Qualifying Round and the Semi-Final Round, had a pointless, nightmare afternoon.

Ever the showman, Egon Muller got to shower the Top 3 on the podium with Champagne. It certainly was an 'Egon toast' !!!

1986 World Longtrack Final 14 September Pfarrkirchen West Germany.

heat 1	Nielsen, Maier, Vendirek, Heinrich Diener, Banks, Wiesbock.
heat 2	Moran, Peter Collins, Karnas, Gerhard, Niemi, Bernd Diener e.f.
heat 3	Gundersen, Riss, Sova, Phil Collins, Otto Pingel, Dannoe.
heat 4	Gerhard, Riss, Maier, Vanderik, Karnas, Dannoe.
heat 5	Bernd Diener, Niemi, Otto Pingel, Phil Collins, Heinrich Diener, Banks.
heat 6	Gundersen, Peter Collins, Moran, Sova, Wiesbock e.f. Nielsen ex. tapes.
heat 7	Gundersen, Dannoe, Vandirek, Banks, Bernd Diener, Moran e.f.
heat 8	Gerhard, Riss, Peter Collins, Otto Pingel, Heinrich Diener, Wiesbock e.f.
heat 9	Nielsen, Maier, Niemi, Sova, Phil Collins, Karnas e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Gundersen, Bernd Diener, Peter Collins, Niemi, Vandirek, Maier e.f.
Semi-Final heat 11	Riss, Nielsen, Gerhard, Otto Pingel, Sova, Moran e.f.
Grand Final heat 12	Gundersen, Peter Collins, Gerhard, Riss e.f, Maier e.f, Nielsen e.f.
Silver Medal Run-off	Peter Collins, Gerhard.

1st Erik Gundersen	Denmark	5 5 5 5 5	25
2nd Peter Collins	England	4 4 3 3 4	18
3rd Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	2 5 5 3 3	18
4 Gerd Riss	West Germany	4 4 4 5 ef	17
5 Hans Nielsen	Denmark	5 x.t 5 4 ef	14
6 Karl Maier	West Germany	4 3 4 ef ef	11
7 Bernd Diener	West Germany	ef 5 1 4	10
8 Kai Niemi	Finland	1 4 3 2	10
9 Petr Vandirek	CZ	3 2 3 1	9
10 Shawn Moran	USA	5 3 ef ef	8
11 Hans Otto Pingel	West Germany	1 3 2 2	8
12 Emil Sova	CZ	3 2 2 1	8
13 Phil Collins	England	2 2 1	5
14 Pavel Karnas	CZ	3 1 0	4
15 Roland Dannoe	Sweden	0 0 4	4
16 Heinrich Diener	West Germany	2 1 1	4
17 Trevor Banks	England	1 0 2	3
18 Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	0 ef ef	0
res Ari Koponen	Finland	d.n.r	
res Jiri Svoboda	CZ	d.n.r	

1987

As usual, the 'Shark Attack' qualifying system took care of some very big 'Goldfish'; Hans Nielsen, who went on to win his 2nd straight World Speedway Final, made it to the Semi-Finals as reserve but that was the end of his line. In that meeting, Peter Collins finished in the wrong end of the pool. Also left on the dock with no tickets were Hans Otto Pingel, Marcel Gerhard and Bernd Diener. West Germany's Anton Kahl lost a World Final reserve berth thanks to the '3 rider per country' rule.

The 1987 World Longtrack Final was held again at Muhldorf, West Germany on a glorious afternoon, 20 September. Over 20,000 witnessed the spectacle as the favourites jockeyed for positions. The biggest surprise was the defender, Erik Gundersen. Apart from two second places, he was well off the pace and did not make the Grand Final.

Simon Wigg made a hash of heat 1. Last from the gate, he was able to catch Klaus Lausch who was carrying a wrist injury, but the rest of the field were gone. From then on, the meeting belonged to Wigg, but it was too late. Karl Maier went into the Grand Final with 18 points equal with England's Martin Hagon. Wigg on 16 alongside Shawn Moran. Egon Muller, back with us on 15 and West Germany's Heinz Huber with 12. Victory for Wigg or Moran would book a place on the podium but Maier and Hagon were shooting for the Gold.

The result? Simon Wigg shot clear for the 4th time in as many races but Hagon blew it! Maier tucked in behind Wigg and counted down the laps to his 3rd World Longtrack crown. Moran was third, forcing fifth placed Hagon to a Bronze medal run-off. Muller may have been a little disappointed being last but he would have to take satisfaction as The Ring Master being back at the Big-Top.

Moran had no trouble against Hagon for the Bronze medal. The Yank would have been overjoyed at being back in the winners circle, Wigg was devastated but for Karl Maier and the home fans? Muhldorf Maier magic !

1987 World Longtrack Final 20 September Muhldorf West Germany

heat 1	Hagon, Muller, Jedek, Stenlund, Wigg, Lausch.
heat 2	Moran, Baker, Niemi, Karnas, Jensen, Morton e.f.
heat 3	Maier, Gundersen, Huber, Riss, Wiesbock, Banks.
heat 4	Jensen, Lausch, Riss, Jedek, Gundersen, Karnas.
heat 5	Wigg, Moran, Huber, Banks, Morton, Stenlund fall.
heat 6	Maier, Hagon, Muller, Baker, Wiesbock, Niemi.
heat 7	Wigg, Moran, Maier, Cross, Gundersen, Niemi.
heat 8	Hagon, Huber, Baker, Riss, Stenlund, Jensen.
heat 9	Muller, Wiesbock, Banks, Jedek, Morton, Karnas.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wigg, Hagon, Muller, Riss, Jedek, Jensen e.f.
Semi-Final heat 11	Maier, Gundersen, Moran, Huber, Baker, Wiesbock.
Grand Final heat 12	Wigg, Maier, Moran, Huber, Hagon, Muller.
Bronze Medal	Run-off Moran, Hagon.

1st	Karl Maier	West Germany	5 5 3 5 4	22
2nd	Simon Wigg	England	1 5 5 5 5	21
3rd	Shawn Moran	USA	5 4 4 3 3	19
4	Martin Hagon	England	5 4 5 4 1	19
5	Egon Muller	West Germany	4 3 5 3 0	15
6	Heinz Huber	West Germany	3 3 4 2 2	14
7	Erik Gundersen	Denmark	4 1 1 4	10
8	Steve Baker	Australia	4 2 3 1	10
9	Gerd Riss	West Germany	2 3 2 2	9
10	Lubos Jedek	CZ	3 2 2 1	8
11	Alois Wiesbock	West Germany	1 1 4 0	6
12	Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	1 5 0 ef	6
13	Trevor Banks	England	0 2 3	5
14	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	0 4 -	4
15	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	2 f 1	3
16	Kai Niemi	Finland	3 0 0	3
17	Chris Morton	England	ef 1 1	2
18	Pavel Karnas	CZ	2 0 0	2
res	Simon Cross	England	- - 2	2
res	Petr Vandirek	CZ	d.n.r	

1988

Someone, somewhere [in a galaxy far, far away?] had what they thought was a good idea. The World Longtrack Championship needed a make-over. And so it came to pass; 16 rider fields, 8 riders per heat, 5 heats each that included Semi-Finals with the top 8 going to a Grand Final. But as before, all points were carried forward. The new recipe and spiced-up competition went ahead and may the sauce be with you !!!

Missing from action this year and the next was popular West German Hans Otto Pingel. And victims of the system included Shawn Moran, Martin Hagon, Marcel Gerhard, Alois Wiesbock, Finn Rune Jensen and the biggest of all, Erik Gundersen who would go on to win the World Speedway Final.

The 1988 World Longtrack Final was held on September 18, hosted by Scheesel, West Germany. Hans Nielsen was joined by his brother Jens Henry and Sam Ermolenko, being the Stars and Stripes only representative, rode in what would be his one and only Longtrack Final.

While the sun kept the clouds at bay, Karl Maier had THE most Golden day. 6 races, 6 wins and he re-wrote the record books claiming his 4th World Title. Next brightest star was West German Klaus Lausch, making up for the previous year's disappointment. Dropping just 3 points up to the Grand Final to Maier, Chris Morton and Hans Nielsen. After that fine performance, even engine failure in the Grand Final could not deny him the Silver Medal. And at last, 'Superstar' of both worlds, Chris Morton was rewarded with a World Final Medal, securing the Bronze just one point behind Lausch.

Did the new formula work? No complaints from Karl 'Maximus' Maier !!!!

1988 World Longtrack Final 18 September Scheesel West Germany.

heat 1	Lausch, Dannoe, JH Nielsen, Ermolenko, Wigg, Morton, Kasper, Schofield.
heat 2	Maier, Heinrich Diener, Riss, Hans Nielsen, Muller, Niemi, Cross, Vandirek.
heat 3	Morton, H Nielsen, JH Nielsen, Muller, Kasper, Cross, Niemi, Ermolenko ex.
heat 4	Maier, Lausch, Dannoe, Riss, Heinrich Diener, Wigg, Schofield, Vandirek.
heat 5	Maier, Morton, Muller, Riss, Niemi, Schofield, Jens Henry Nielsen, Dannoe e.f.
heat 6	Lausch, H Nielsen, Diener, Wigg, Vandirek, Koponen, Ermolenko e.f, Cross e.f.
heat 7	Maier, Dannoe, Wigg, Ermolenko, Vandirek, JH Nielsen, Niemi, Cross e.f.
heat 8	Morton, Lausch, Diener, Riss, Muller, Schofield, Baker, H Nielsen e.f.
Semi-Final heat 9	Maier, Dannoe, Diener, Wigg, Vandirek, Niemi, Baker, Muller e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	H.Nielsen, Lausch, Ermolenko, Riss, Morton, JH Nielsen, Schofield, Koponen.
Grand Final heat 11	Maier, Morton, Riss, H.Nielsen, Wigg, Heinrich Diener, Dannoe, Lausch e.f.

1st	Karl Maier	West Germany	7 7 7 7 7 7	42
2nd	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	7 6 7 6 6 ef	32
3rd	Chris Morton	England	2 7 6 7 3 6	31
4	Hans Nielsen	Denmark	4 6 6 ef 7 4	27
5	Gerd Riss	West Germany	5 4 4 4 4 5	26
6	Heinrich Diener	West Germany	6 3 5 5 5 2	26
7	Roland Danne	Sweden	6 5 ef 6 6 1	24
8	Simon Wigg	England	3 2 4 5 4 3	21
9	Egon Muller	West Germany	3 4 5 3 ef	15
10	Jens Henry Nielsen	Denmark	5 5 1 2 2	15
11	Sam Ermolenko	USA	4 x ef 4 5	13
12	Kai Niemi	Finland	2 1 3 1 2	9
13	Petr Vandirek	CZ	0 0 3 3 3	9
14	Steve Schofield	England	0 1 2 2 1	6
15	Toni Kasper	CZ	1 3 f - -	4
16	Simon Cross	England	1 2 ef ef -	3
res	Steve Baker	Australia	- - - 1 1	2
res	Ari Koponen	Finland	- - 2 - 0	2

1989

After finishing 2nd to Hans Nielsen in his first round, the USA's Sam Ermolenko went to Herxheim in West Germany for the Semi-Final. He had 12 points from 2 rides and was confident of making his 2nd World Longtrack Final. It was not to be. Sam was involved in one of the worst crashes in World Championship history. Semi-conscious, he was flown to hospital for emergency treatment having sustained 12 fractures to his right leg. While the rest of the season was written off and Sam never did ride in the World Longtrack Championship again, he went back to his speedway career and in 1993, became Champion of the World !!! Now there's a Super-hero...

Missing from the Championship that year was the Double Champion Erik Gundersen. But for an engine failure while well ahead, Erik would have taken the World Speedway Final Silver Medal behind the unbeaten Hans Nielsen. As it was, Erik was 4th. He would surely come again in both competitions! Not so as on September 17, at Speedway's World Cup Final, Erik was involved in a first race horror crash that left him paralysed from the neck down and unable to breath. Had it not been for the quick action of the first aid attendant, he would have died! It took a long time but Erik eventually did walk again. However his amazing Speedway and Longtrack career was over.

The Qualifying rounds in 1989 saw the eliminations of Shawn Moran, Bernd Diener and Heinrich Diener. While at the Semi-Final, West Germany's Ewe Gessner and Alois Wiesbock went out thanks to the '3 riders per country' nonsense.

The last World Longtrack Final of the decade was held on the 20th of August at Marianske Lazne, Czechoslovakia. Brilliant sunshine set the stage for a brilliant meeting. Brightest sunbeam of the afternoon was Simon Wigg. Top scorer for the Grand Final with 33 points, beaten only by the defender Karl Maier and home favourite Ales Dryml. The CZ ace had 30 points and Maier 27. That being said, Simon could drop points in the Grand Final, but not too many. The home crowd were ecstatic as Dryml took the chequered flag from Maier and Wigg. The 5 points securing Wiggy the Gold Medal, one point clear of his Czech mate. Bronze Medal this time for Maier who even managed a smile on the podium. Egon Muller right back in the thick of it and 'The Bearded Wonder' loving every minute.

And so the decade ended with Karl Maier having stamped his authority on the competition with the record of 4 times Champion of the World. Two for Simon Wigg and Erik Gundersen. One Title each for Mike Lee and Shawn Moran. What would the new decade have in store? The Berlin Wall held a clue. As it came down everyone could see that the times, they were a changing...

1989 World Longtrack Final 20 August Marianske Laszne Czechoslovakia.

heat 1	Maier, Wigg, Stenlund, Gerhard, Nielsen, Hadek, Muller e.f, Vandirek fall.
heat 2	Trupkovic, Riss, Dryml, Cox, Morton, Schofield, Lausch e.f, Pollehn fall.
heat 3	Dryml, Wigg, Cox, Nielsen, Hadek, Morton, Schofield, Stenlund ex.
heat 4	Trupkovic, Pollehn, Maier, Gerhard, Muller, Vandirek, Lausch, Riss e.f.
heat 5	Wigg, Stenlund, Maier, Vandirek, Cox, Pollehn, Morton, Riss e.f.
heat 6	Dryml, Nielsen, Muller, Gerhard, Hadek, Trupkovic, Kasper, Schofield e.f.
heat 7	Stenlund, Muller, Dryml, Hadek, Maier, Trupkovic, Riss, Cox ex.
heat 8	Wigg, Pollehn, Schofield, Nielsen, Vandirek, Gerhard, Morton, Kasper.
Semi-Final heat 9	Wigg, Stenlund, Muller, Schofield, Gerhard, Kasper, Trupkovic, Vandirek e.f.
Semi Final heat 10	Maier, Dryml, Riss, Cox, Pollehn, Nielsen, Morton, Hadek.
Grand Final heat 11	Dryml, Maier, Wigg, Stenlund, Muller, Pollehn, Nielsen, Trupkovic e.f.

1st	Simon Wigg	England	6 6 7 7 7 5	38
2nd	Ales Dryml	CZ	5 7 7 5 6 7	37
3rd	Karl Maier	West Germany	7 5 5 3 7 6	33
4	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	5 x 6 7 6 4	28
5	Egon Muller	West Germany	ef 3 5 6 5 3	22
6	Hans Nielsen	Denmark	3 4 6 4 2 1	20
7	Andre Pollehn	West Germany	f 6 2 6 3 2	19
8	Mario Trupkovic	West Germany	7 7 2 2 1 ef	19
9	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	4 4 4 2 3	17
10	Marvyn Cox	England	4 5 3 x 4	16
11	Gerd Riss	West Germany	6 ef ef 1 5	12
12	Steve Schofield	England	2 1 ef 5 4	12
13	Borivoj Hadek	CZ	2 3 3 4 0	12
14	Petr Vandirek	CZ	f 2 4 3 ef	9
15	Chris Morton	England	3 2 1 1 1	8
16	Toni Kasper res	CZ	- - 1 0 2	3
17	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	ef 1 - - -	1
res	Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	d.n.r	

1990

The new decade kicked off without Egon Muller. Had Kiel's answer to Kylie grown tired of Longtrack's locomotion? His rivals should be so lucky, lucky lucky lucky... And a new qualifying route was introduced with 3 Semi-Finals. [The 80's were not over afterall.]

Denmark's Jan O Pedersen had made it to his Longtrack debut but the broken arm that cost him his World Speedway Final place, cost him this one as well.

The 1990 World Longtrack Final was held on the 19th of August at Herxheim, West Germany. Yet another sun-soaked afternoon resulted in a successful defence for Simon Wigg and his third World Title. But it wasn't all plain sailing. He found tough opposition indeed from Karl Maier, Hans Otto Pingel, Marcel Gerhard and Klaus Lausch. Maier led on points after 4 rounds but an engine failure well clear in his Semi-Final sunk his ship in the process. As it was, Otto Pingel [meeting reserve who took the place of Jan O Pedersen] had to beat Wigg in the Grand Final to force a Gold Medal run-off if Wigg was second. But, it wasn't to be as Wigg shot to the lead. Otto Pingel made a good start but it wouldn't last. A 'duck' for Otto Pingel was not a total disaster as he finished level on points with Maier, the 4 time Champion winning the Silver Medal run-off.

The famous Wiggy grin was as Golden as his Medal and trophy. Maier also managed a smile and Otto Pingel was simply overjoyed !

Proceedings were however overshadowed somewhat as West Germany's Gerd Riss had been taken to hospital with serious head injuries after a terrible accident in heat 5. He was in a coma for ages and everyone hoped for the best. Would he be ok? Oh my goodness, would he ever !!! What a year; the Soviet Union broke up and in October, Germany was unified and the band played on...

1990 World Longtrack Final 19 August Herxheim West Germany.

heat 1	Lausch, Wigg, Stenlund, Hadek, Loram, Vandirek, Trupkovic, Limbrunner fall.
heat 2	Gerhard, Otto Pingel, Maier, Cox, Riss, Dryml, Karnas, Schofield.
heat 3	Maier, Cox, Wigg, Schofield, Stenlund, Dryml, Limbrunner, Loram.
heat 4	Gerhard, Riss, Lausch, Otto Pingel, Trupkovic, Vandirek, Karnas, Hadek fall.
heat 5	Maier, Limbrunner, Lausch, Gerhard, Loram, Cox, Riss fall, Trupkovic fall.
heat 6	Wigg, Otto Pingel, Stenlund, Dryml, Vandirek, Hadek, Schofield, Karnas.
heat 7	Otto Pingel, Stenlund, Hadek, Cox, Limbrunner, Dryml, JH Nielsen, Jensen.
heat 8	Maier, Lausch, Wigg, Vandirek, Loram, Karnas, Schofield, Gerhard e.f.
Semi-Final heat 9	Otto Pingel, Loram, Hadek, Karnas, Vandirek, JH Nielsen, Maier e.f, Stenlund ex.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wigg, Cox, Limbrunner, Gerhard, Schofield, Jensen, Lausch e.f, Dryml e.f.
Grand Final heat 11	Wigg, Gerhard, Lausch, Maier, Hadek, Stenlund, Cox, Otto Pingel.
Silver Medal Run-off	Maier, Otto Pingel.

1st	Simon Wigg	England	6 5 7 5 7 7	37
2nd	Karl Maier	West Germany	5 7 7 7 ef 4	30
3rd	Hans otto Pingel	West Germany	6 4 6 7 7 0	30
4	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	7 7 4 ef 4 6	28
5	Klaus Lausch	West Germany	7 5 5 6 ef 5	28
6	Marvyn Cox	England	4 6 2 4 6 1	23
7	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	5 3 5 6 ex 2	21
8	Borivoj Hadek	CZ	4 ef 2 5 5 3	19
9	Georg Limbrunner	West Germany	f 1 6 3 5	15
10	Mark Loram	England	3 0 3 3 6	15
11	Petr Vandirek	CZ	2 2 3 4 3	14
12	Ales Dryml	CZ	2 2 4 2 ef	10
13	Steve Schofield	England	0 4 1 1 3	9
14	Gerd Riss	West Germany	3 6 f - -	9
15	Pavel Karnas	CZ	1 1 0 2 4	8
16	Mario Trupkovic	West Germany	1 3 f - -	4
res	Jens Henry Nielsen	Denmark	- - - 1 2	3
res	Finn Rune Jensen	Denmark	- - - 0 2	2
	Jan O Pedersen	Denmark	Q. inj. n.s	

1991

Back to the competition came the Meister Muller and the 42 year old did not disgrace himself with 10 points at the Semi-Final. However, it was not enough for a 17th World Final appearance. And after 3 years of the 8 riders per race formula, the competition returned to the tried and true 18 rider field, with heat 12 being the Grand Final. And yes, back to 6 riders per race, the Gerd Riss crash had a lot to do with that.

The 21st World Longtrack Final was held at Marianske Laszno, Czechoslovakia on July 28. 20,000 spectators filled the terraces and were treated to a wonderful afternoon of theatre and drama. Defending Champion Simon Wigg was hoping to be the first to win 3 'World' Titles in a row but from the start, it was not going to be his day. No joy either for Karl Maier and even less for Hans Otto Pingel. No, they were all outdone and it was Germany's Gerd Riss, riding in his 8th Longtrack Final and coming back from the previous years disaster that stole the show and blasted to his first World Title. Dropping just one point all day.

In the Grand Final, Sweden's Stefan Dannoe led the pack but was quickly overtaken by Dryml to the massive delight of the home fans but just as quick, Riss roared passed Dryml down the back straight and never looked back. The Czechs were able to celebrate as Ales Dryml won the Silver Medal, beating Speedway star, Denmark's Jan O Pedersen in the deciding run-off. Pedersen would later go on to smash all opposition out of sight and become World Speedway Champion.

Making a Longtrack debut late in his career, New Zealand's Mitch Shirra showed quite some promise. In November, he won the Australian Longtrack Final from Simon Wigg and Stefan Dannoe. Ten days later, the New Zealand Title from Wigg and Simon Cross. Just for a bit of fun like...

1991 World Longtrack Final 28 July Marianske Laszno Czechoslovakia.

heat 1	Gerhard, Shirra, Lausch, Cox, Loram, Otto Pingel.
heat 2	Dryml, Pedersen, Dannoe, Wigg, Stenlund, Scherwitzki e.f.
heat 3	Riss, Maier, Schofield, Smith, Holub, Hadek e.f.
heat 4	Shirra, Dryml, Lausch, Smith, Hadek, Scherwitzki e.f.
heat 5	Riss, Gerhard, Maier, Wigg, Otto Pingel, Stenlund.
heat 6	Dannoe, Pedersen, Loram, Cox, Schofield, Holub.
heat 7	Shirra, Smith, Wigg, Otto Pingel, Schofield, Dannoe.
heat 8	Pedersen, Gerhard, Maier, Cox, Scherwitzki, Hadek.
heat 9	Dryml, Riss, Stenlund, Loram, Lausch, Holub e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Pedersen, Gerhard, Dryml, Smith, Cox, Lausch.
Semi-Final heat 11	Riss, Dannoe, Wigg, Loram, Shirra, Maier e.f.
Grand Final heat 12	Riss, Dryml, Pedersen, Shirra, Gerhard, Dannoe e.f.
Silver Medal Run-off	Dryml, Pedersen.

1st	Gerd Riss	Germany	5 5 4 5 5	24
2nd	Ales Dryml	CZ	5 4 5 3 4	21
3rd	Jan O Pedersen	Denmark	4 4 5 5 3	21
4	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	5 4 4 4 1	18
5	Mitch Shirra	New Zealand	4 5 5 1 2	17
6	Stefan Dannoe	Sweden	3 5 0 4 ef	12
7	Karl Maier	Germany	4 3 3 ef	10
8	Andy Smith	England	2 2 4 2	10
9	Simon Wigg	England	2 2 3 3	10
10	Mark Loram	England	1 3 2 2	8
11	Klaus Lausch	Germany	3 3 1 0	7
12	Marvyn Cox	England	2 2 2 1	7
13	Steve Schofield	England	3 1 1	5
14	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	1 0 3	4
15	Hans Otto Pingel	Germany	0 1 2	3
16	Walter Scherwitzki	Germany	ef ef 1	1
17	Jan Holub	CZ	1 0 ef	1
18	Borivoj Hadek	CZ	ef 1 0	1
res	Andy Bossner	Austria	d.n.r	
res	Mario Trupkovic	Germany	d.n.r	

1992

Missing from this year's World Final would be such stars as Erik Stenlund, Hans Otto Pingel and Andre Pollehn but THE biggest name being Jan O Pedersen. The World number 3 and reigning World Speedway Champion, sustained a broken back and while he escaped a wheelchair, his days of thrilling the crowds with his spectacular acts of balance, skill and daring were over!

The 1992 World Longtrack Final was held on September 13 at Pfarrikirchen, Germany and it was Final number 17 for Egon Muller!!! It wasn't the return he had hoped for but how he loved being back in the action and his adoring fans egging on his every move. The afternoon was a complete disaster for Simon Wigg. He was pointless before his first race began, jumping the start and being immediately excluded. He protested against this long and loud but to no avail. That was followed by a duck and an engine failure, leaving the Triple Champion pointless.

In 1982, Switzerland's Marcel Gerhard made his World Final debut. Ten years later, he was Champion of the World. Riding the Godden powered lay-down, he stunned the locals and home favourites, looking so 'at home', four wins and a third made it look oh so easy. It wasn't the case ofcourse. Karl Maier had 18 points going into the Grand Final equal with Gerhard. The defender Gerd Riss and The Flying Kiwi, Mitch Shirra on 17 each. The Grand Final however saw Gerhard cut through the opposition like a Swiss Army knife! He flew to the front as Mitch Shirra and Brit, Mark Loram upset the German Superguns. As Gerhard collected the Gold medal, it was hard cheese for the rest.

Shirra took the Silver as Maier's fourth place settled him with the Bronze. Gerhard's podium grin was so big, he could have been hiding a box of chocolates under his moustache!

Huge talking point of the meeting was a monstrous crash in the Semi-Final heat 10. Riss made the gate and led into the back straight. Smith then powered by on the inside but Riss immediately regained the lead and as he did so, there was a violent coming together sending the Brit's bike flying into the air and Smith tumbling down the track like a rag doll. Germany's Uwe Gessner hit the rogue machine while Mark Loram dived onto the grass to escape the mayhem. See it for yourself on 'You Tube' and try to work out what happened. Smith was in a serious condition and air lifted to hospital. As the bright orange helicopter flew into the bright blue sky, everyone wondered, would he recover? Yes Sir! While he never qualified for another World Longtrack Final, in Speedway, he was British Champion in 1993, 1994 and 1995!

Rumblings were occurring that were starting to shake World Final foundations. It was announced that the last World Speedway Final would be held in 1993. [It turned out to be 1994] In its place would be a Grand Prix series. Wait ! I can hear Dr Phil, "What the HELL were they thinkin ???" Should that happen, and it did, what would happen to The World Longtrack Final ? The writing was on the remains of the Berlin Wall and it was no graffiti art !!!

1992 World Longtrack Final 13 September Pfarrkirchen Germany.

heat 1	Gerhard, Shirra, Lausch, Muller, Cox, Schofield.
heat 2	Maier, Loram, Gustafsson, Dryml, Vallejos, Parker. Wigg ex.tapes.
heat 3	Riss, Gessner, Hadek, Smith, Dannoe, Diener.
heat 4	Dryml, Gessner, Gerhard, Dannoe, Lausch, Wigg.
heat 5	Riss, Loram, Gustafsson, Muller, Cox, Diener.
heat 6	Maier, Shirra, Smith, Hadek, Schofield, Parker.
heat 7	Lausch, Maier, Gustafsson, Muller, Gessner, Hadek.
heat 8	Shirra, Dannoe, Cox, Diener, Parker, Wigg e.f.
heat 9	Gerhard, Loram, Dryml, Riss, Schofield, Smith.
Semi-Final heat 10	Riss, Maier, Loram, Gustafsson, Gessner e.f, Smith inj. n.s.
Semi-Final heat 11	Gerhard, Shirra, Dryml, Dannoe, Lausch, Muller e.f.
Grand Final heat 12	Gerhard, Shirra, Loram, Maier, Riss, Dryml.

1st	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	5 3 5 5 5	23
2nd	Mitch Shirra	New Zealand	4 4 5 4 4	21
3rd	Karl Maier	Germany	5 5 4 4 2	20
4	Gerd Riss	Germany	5 5 2 5 1	18
5	Mark Loram	England	4 4 4 3 3	18
6	Ales Dryml	CZ	2 5 3 3 0	13
7	Henrik Gustaffson	Sweden	3 3 3 2	11
8	Klaus Lausch	Germany	3 1 5 1	10
9	Uwe Gessner	Germany	4 4 1 ef	9
10	Stefan Dannoe	Sweden	1 2 4 2	9
11	Egon Muller	Germany	2 2 2 ef	6
12	Andy Smith	England	2 3 0 f/ns	5
13	Borivoj Hadek	CZ	3 2 0	5
14	Marvyn Cox	England	1 1 3	5
15	Steve Schofield	England	0 1 1	2
16	Bernd Diener	Germany	0 0 2	2
17	Shane Parker	Australia	0 0 1	1
18	Luis Vallejos res	Argentina	1 - -	1
19	Simon Wigg	England	x.t 0 ef	0
res	Vlastimil Cervenka	CZ	d.n.r	
res	Kai Niemi	Finland	d.n.r	

1993

The 1993 World Longtrack Final was held on September 26 at Muhldorf, Germany in the pouring rain! On the saturated track on that miserable Sunday afternoon, home favourite Karl Maier was all set to sail to his 5th World Title, leading the scorers up to the Grand Final with 19 points. He had gone down only to England's Steve Schofield in his first race. Simon Wigg was 2 points behind on 17 and defending Champion Marcel Gerhard had 14. So Wigg could still win but Maier would have to sink in Titanic fashion.

The drenched home crowd cheered on their hero as the riders lined up for the start. As the tape went up, the horns and klaxons fell silent as Wigg powered into the lead with Karl Maier in big trouble at the back. Wigg raced on, feeling sure that the Silver Medal was his. Maier picked up a point when Ales Dryml broke down but that was it. Wiggy crossed the finish line, taking his 4th Title but he didnt know it until he got back to the pits!

The disconsolate Maier would take no joy from standing on the podium with the Silver Medal. A satisfying end for Gerhard as he beat Hungarian Antol Kocso in the Bronze medal run-off. Earlier in the year, Gerhard had been involved in a shocking crash and his injuries were at one stage life threatening. What a comeback!

Egon Muller, riding in his 18th World Longtrack Final enjoyed three good rides but a duck in heat 4 sunk his hopes in the Muhldorf mud. Now in his mid forties, he could still foot it, or paddle it in this case and there was no egg on his face! Not so however for Gerd Riss who endured a nightmare afternoon. Engine failure leading his first race was followed by a win. But a second engine failure, again in front sent him home with nothing but a muddy bike and boots! New Zealand's Tony Briggs at 31 years of age made his World Final debut, 12 years after his Speedway career had come to an end with a broken neck!!!

As the dark clouds hovered overhead, the home crowd splashing their way out of the arena in stunned silence, Simon Wigg was just singing in the rain...

1993 World Longtrack Final 26 September Muhldorf Germany.

heat 1	Gerhard, Wigg, Shirra, Stenlund, Briggs, Riss e.f.
heat 2	Schofield, Maier, Kocso, Dannoe, Screen, Berge.
heat 3	Dryml, Muller, Gustafsson, Loram, Fry, Diener.
heat 4	Maier, Briggs, Screen, Loram, Shirra, Muller.
heat 5	Kocso, Wigg, Dryml, Diener, Dannoe, Stenlund.
heat 6	Riss, Gerhard, Schofield, Fry, Gustafsson, Berge.
heat 7	Gustafsson, Shirra, Muller, Schofield, Kocso, Stenlund e.f.
heat 8	Wigg, Diener, Screen, Berge, Loram, Riss e.f.
heat 9	Maier, Gerhard, Dannoe, Fry, Briggs, Dryml.
Semi-Final heat 10	Maier, Muller, Kocso, Shirra, Schofield, Briggs.
Semi-Final heat 11	Dryml, Wigg, Dannoe, Screen, Gerhard, Gustafsson e.f.
Grand Final heat 12	Wigg, Kocso, Schofield, Gerhard, Maier, Dryml e.f.
Bronze Medal Run-off	Gerhard, Kocso

1st	Simon Wigg	England	4 4 5 4 5	22
2nd	Karl Maier	Germany	4 5 5 5 1	20
3rd	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	5 4 4 1 2	16
4	Antal Kocso	Hungary	3 5 1 3 4	16
5	Steve Schofield	England	5 3 2 1 3	14
6	Ales Dryml	CZ	5 3 0 5 ef	13
7	Egon Muller	Germany	4 0 3 4	11
8	Mitch Shirra	New Zealand	3 1 4 2	10
9	Henrik Gustafsson	Sweden	3 1 5 ef	9
10	Stefan Dannoe	Sweden	2 1 3 3	9
11	Joe Screen	England	1 3 3 2	9
12	Tony Briggs	New Zealand	1 4 1 0	6
13	Bernd Diener	Germany	0 2 4	6
14	Mark Loram	England	2 2 1	5
15	Paul Fry	England	1 2 2	5
16	Gerd Riss	Germany	ef 5 ef	5
17	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	2 0 ef	2
18	Philippe Berge	France	0 0 2	2
res	Jason Crump	Australia	d.n.r	
res	Andy Bossner	Austria	d.n.r	

1994

Every Finalist this year had a tonne of pressure taken off as Karl Maier would not be on parade. Again, he fell victim to the Semi-Final madness of the '2 rider per country' rule. At the Scheesel Semi-Final, Andre Pollehn was on the podium 1st with Egon Muller 2nd and Simon Wigg 3rd. Maier was 4th but with Pollehn and Muller ahead of him, the World Final and its legion of fans was robbed of one of its hottest favourites. On the same day at Herxheim, German Joachim Kugelmann was also knocked out by the same rule, finishing 5th behind Mark Loram England, Bohumil Brhel CZ, and fellow Germans Bernd Diener and Gerd Riss.

The defender Simon Wigg qualified on a Dutch liscence after problems with his home authorities and fellow Brit, Marvyn Cox did the same but on a German liscence! Cox also rode in the World Speedway Final in a German race-jacket.

Tony Briggs made it to his second World Final but injury prevented his appearance and Swede Erik Stenlund was also unable to take his place. That saw reprieves for the reserves Marcel Gerhard and Brit, Joe Screen.

The 1994 World Longtrack Final was held at Marianske Lazne, Czech Republic on September 25 and thankfully, Hip Hip Hip Hooray, the sun had got his hat on and was coming out to play! Also in playtime mood was the defender Simon Wigg and he had a ball, playing with and demolishing all opposition, 5 starts, 5 wins and the World Record 5 times World longtrack Champio !!!!! The scorechart reflecting his mastery over the field that saw 3 Germans next in line. Andre Pollehn deserved the Silver Medal after his 3 wins even though he sort of duffed the Grand Final.

Disappointment however for Gerd Riss who was right in line for 2nd place until his engine failed in the Grand Final. But he did salvage some pride in winning the Bronze Medal run-off from Egon Muller. What can we say about Herr Muller? Riding in his 19th World Final, just let his record speak for itself; 1974 - 25 years old, 1st. Another two wins follow that. 1984 - 35 years old, 2nd. 1994 - 45 years old, 4th on the same points as the Bronze Medalist. On what fossil fuel was this mighty T-Rex running? No idea and he was far from ready to be a museum piece either!

1994 saw the last [ever?] World Speedway Final held. Sweden's Tony Rickardsson won after a triple run-off with 3 times Champion, Hans Nielsen from Denmark and Australia's Craig Boyce. It was everything a World Final should be; a bubbling cauldron of 'Magic' with thrills, spills, drama, controversy, excitement and super model glamour. The Speedway world was then robbed of this institution and the World Speedway Championship from 1995 became a Grand Prix. Brilliant racing and all of the above? Not quite, the 'Magic' was gone! The Big Top atmosphere of knife-edged hype, where one mistake, one engine failure, one moment of madness or that of someone else could cost a rider THE biggest prize of his life was all over. The political correctness of the Grand Prix has sucked the life out of what Speedway was always meant to be, 'Magic' !!!

Now all eyes were on the Longtrack World. Could the same happen to the World Longtrack Final? "Well Golly! A sure thaing thar Andy! Tell Aunt Bee Gomer says 'Hey' !"

1994 World Longtrack Final 25 September Marianske Lazne Czech Republic.

heat 1	Wigg, Riss, Dryml, Barth, Vallejos, Kurguskin.
heat 2	Gerhard, Screen, Diener, Brhel, Crump, Tatum e.f.
heat 3	Gustafsson, Muller, Pollehn, Loram, Mora, Cox fall.
heat 4	Pollehn, Diener, Crump, Dryml, Kurguskin, Cox e.f.
heat 5	Wigg, Brhel, Muller, Gerhard, Mora, Barth fall.
heat 6	Riss, Tatum, Loram, Screen, Vallejos, Gustafsson e.f.
heat 7	Pollehn, Tatum, Loram, Barth, Brhel, Kurguskin.
heat 8	Wigg, Muller, Diener, Screen, Cox e.f, Vallejos e.f.
heat 9	Riss, Gustafsson, Dryml, Gerhard, Crump, Mora.
Semi-Final heat 10	Wigg, Diener, Muller, Brhel, Tatum, Screen.
Semi-Final heat 11	Pollehn, Dryml, Riss, Gerhard, Loram, Gustafsson.
Grand Final heat 12	Wigg, Dryml, Muller, Pollehn, Diener, Riss e.f.
Bronze medal Run-off	Riss, Muller.

1st	Simon Wigg	England/Holland	5 5 5 5 5	25
2nd	Andre Pollehn	Germany	3 5 5 5 2	20
3rd	Gerd Riss	Germany	4 5 5 3 ef	17
4	Egon Muller	Germany	4 3 4 3 3	17
5	Ales Dryml	CZ	3 2 3 4 4	16
6	Bernd Diener	Germany	3 4 3 4 1	15
7	Marcel Gerhard res	Switzerland	5 2 2 2	11
8	Bohumil Brhel	CZ	2 4 1 2	9
9	Henrik Gustafsson	Sweden	5 ef 4 0	9
10	Mark Loram	England	2 3 3 1	9
11	Kelvin Tatum	England	ef 4 4 1	9
12	Joe Screen res	England	4 2 2 0	8
13	Jason Crump	Australia	1 3 1	5
14	Robert Barth	Germany	2 f 2	4
15	Massimo Mora	Italy	1 1 0	2
16	Luis Vallejos	Argentina	1 1 ef	2
17	Oleg Kurguskin	Russia	0 1 0	1
18	Marvyn Cox	England/Germany	f ef ef	0
res	Oleg Kiptev	Russia	d.n.r	
	Tony Briggs	New Zealand	Q. inj n.s	
	Erik Stenlund	Sweden	Q. inj n.s	

1995

And yet another Giant is made to tumble from the beanstalk thanks to the Semi-Final '2 rider per country' fiasco. At Muhldorf, Brit Marvyn Cox wins from Karl Maier with Gerd Riss third. But as Cox is riding with a German licence, World Final Red-hot favourite Riss is told, "don't bother!"

From the same Semi-Final, Henrik Gustafsson and Tony Briggs fail to qualify. Egon Muller and Marcel Gerhard also miss the bus from their Harsewinkel Semi-Final. Argentinian Luis Vallejos and Brit Mark Loram are ousted from Semi-Final 3 at Ludwigslust. [5 years later, Loram will become World Speedway Champion] Russian Oleg Kurguskin wins the Number 3 Semi-Final but he is unable to take his place at the World Final. Veteran CZ ace Ales Dryml gets to ride in his place.

The Eichenring at Scheesl, Germany hosted the 1995 World Longtrack Final on September 17. It was another sunny Sunday afternoon and the 'Magic' bit hard as no-one was able to dominate.

Defending Champion Simon Wigg, ever so keen to become the first rider to win 3 World Finals in a row, made the Grand Final with 17. Not the Super-power of 12 months ago but his consistency paid off. That was equal footing with Germany's Walter Scherwitzki. European Grasstrack Champion, Kelvin Tatum from England had been the closest to domination. Going into the Grand Final with 15 points after 3 wins, but an engine failure leading heat 9 cost him the maximum.

The bouncing Czech, Bohumil Brhel had a good afternoon, securing a Final berth also with 15. 'King of the Ring' Karl Maier was desperate for a 5th World Title. After a first round engine failure, Scherwitzki was the only rider to get the better of him. A programmed race against Tatum would have been interesting! But still, that gave Maier 14 points for a Grand Final place. They were joined by Marvyn Cox with 13 points. Leaving a very disappointed Australian Jason Crump in the pits, also with 13. The World Speedway Under 21 Champion was third in his Semi-Final heat 11 whereas Cox had placed fourth in the Semi-Final heat 10. Everyone thought that Crump had therefore booked his Grand Final place, except the referee! Where was Cocodile Dundee when we needed him?

And so the curtain was set to be raised on the Plays Final act. 17,000 spectators, basking in the sunshine cheering for their favourites watched as the tape flew into the air. The Germans went wild as Maier hit the front from Tatum, Wigg getting stuck behind Cox. If they stayed that way, it would mean a Wigg, Maier, Tatum triple Gold Medal run-off. How good could it get?! Too good and with Maier almost home and dry, gut wrenchingly he dropped out with another engine failure! Tatum roared by and secured the win for 20 points as Cox held out Wigg who was left equal now with Tatum. Despite coming home fifth, a delighted Scherwitzki had secured the Bronze Medal leaving a heartbroken Maier to choke back the tears.

So now an extra piece of 'Magic' was on display. Could Wiggy do the Triple Crown? No !!! He could only watch as Tatum bounced out of the gate and made it 5 wins from 6 starts, so to be crowned Longtrack Champion of the World. No Grand Prix could match that kind of 'Golden Globe Theatre'...

1995 World Longtrack Final 17 September Scheesel Germany.

heat 1	Tatum, Brhel, Diener, Barth, van der Helm, Bishop.
heat 2	Scherwitzki, Cross, Cox, Doncaster, Schneiderwind, Maier e.f.
heat 3	Wigg, Crump, Dryml, Berge, Pollehn, Dannoe e.f.
heat 4	Maier, Wigg, Dannoe, Barth, van der Helm, Doncaster.
heat 5	Brhel, Cox, Pollehn, Crump, Bishop, Schneiderwind.
heat 6	Tatum, Scherwitzki, Cross, Berge, Schofield, Diener e.f. Dryml ex. tapes.
heat 7	Wigg, Cox, Scherwitzki, van der Helm, Berge, Bishop.
heat 8	Maier, Brhel, Cross, Pollehn, Diener e.f, Dannoe e.f.
heat 9	Dryml, Crump, Doncaster, Schneiderwind, Barth e.f, Tatum e.f.
Semi-Final heat 10	Tatum, Dryml, Wigg, Cox, Cross, Berge.
Semi-Final heat 11	Scherwitzki, Maier, Crump, Brhel, Doncaster, Pollehn.
Grand Final heat 12	Tatum, Cox, Wigg, Brhel, Scherwitzki, Maier e.f.
Gold Medal Run-off	Tatum, Wigg.

1st	Kelvin Tatum	England	5 5 ef 5 5	20
2nd	Simon Wigg	England/Holland	5 4 5 3 3	20
3rd	Walter Scherwitzki	Germany	5 4 3 5 1	18
4	Marvyn Cox	England/Germany	3 4 4 2 4	17
5	Bohumil Brhel	CZ	4 5 4 2 2	17
6	Karl Maier	Germany	ef 5 5 4 ef	14
7	Jason Crump	Australia	4 2 4 3	13
8	Ales Dryml res	CZ	3 x.t 5 4	12
9	Simon Cross	England	4 3 3 1	11
10	Andre Pollehn	Germany	1 3 2 0	6
11	Jeremy Doncaster	England	2 0 3 1	6
12	Phillippe Berge	France	2 2 1 ef	5
13	Robert Barth	Germany	2 2 ef	4
14	Anne van der Helm	Holland	1 1 2	4
15	Bernd Diener	Germany	3 ef ef	3
16	Stefan Dannoe	Sweden	ef 3 ef	3
17	Zdenek Schneiderwind	CZ	1 0 2	3
18	Steven Bishop	England	0 1 0	1
res	Steve Schofield	England	- 1 -	1
res	Vaclav Milik	CZ	d.n.r	
	Oleg Kurguskin	Russia	Q. n.s	

1996

1996, The Final Curtain Call. And for Egon Muller, World Final number 20! It was so fitting that he be on parade, 47 years of age alongside Jason Crump and Paul Hurry at 21!!! And he beat them both, Egon top!!! Sunnyside up? Well, it was a lovely sunny day at Herxheim, Germany on September 8 and the 15,000 crowd were treated to a flawless exhibition of Longtrack genius by the home favourite Gerd Riss. In his 12th Final, he was never in any danger and the maximum score reflected his dominance.

This was the 6th unbeaten day in the Final's history joining Ivan Mauger 1972, Egon Muller 1974, Erik Gundersen 1986, Karl Maier 1988 and Simon Wigg 1994. And to the delight of all German fans, it was a white-wash for the Medals. Bernd Diener dropped just 2 points on his way to the Silver Medal. In round two, going down to the defender Kelvin Tatum and then in the Grand Final to Riss. And consistency paid off for Robert Barth, blocking Marcel Gerhard in the Grand Final to secure the Bronze.

It was also World Final number 12 for Gerhard and the former Champion may have been able to take some comfort by knowing he had only been beaten by the very best on the day. Kelvin Tatum started off in fine fashion with two wins but suffered engine failure while leading heat 8. Unlike last year, he was unable to recover. World Final number 17 for Karl Maier was not a happy send off but the 4 Time World Champion was far from disgraced. Simon Wigg's 13th World Final was hampered by a shoulder injury but even he could stand tall at the end of the day. Jason Crump would have hoped for more but this lad's future lay in Speedway Super-Stardom. He would eventually go on to become 3 times World Speedway Champion. The veterans Muller and Ales Dryml, the Czech's 14th Final did what was expected of them.

And so as the chequered flag came down for the last time, it was all over. Elvis had left the building. Everything I said about the World Speedway Final goes for the World Longtrack Final as well. What of the future? A Grand Prix series combined the Longtrack and Grasstrack worlds. When launched, many top names stayed away from the 1997 event, won by Germany's Tommy Dunker. Then over the next 12 years, three riders dominated the whole gig. Gerd Riss would win six, making him 8 times World Champion. Robert Barth went speeding to four and Kelvin Tatum winning twice. For many years they swapped podium positions with each other...

True Longtrack fans have never forgotten the thrill that only a World Final could deliver, Speedway and longtrack BUT;

The Circus was sold for a miserly bet,
Elephants packed in a Jumbo jet,
As the Ringmaster rode into the sunset,
He waved and sighed "Auf Wiedersehen Pet."

1996 World Longtrack Final 8 September Herxheim Germany.

heat 1	Riss, Gerhard, Berge, Brhel, Hurry, Gunnestad e.f.
heat 2	Diener, Maier, Muller, Milik, Crump, Schofield.
heat 3	Tatum, Barth, Wigg, van der Helm, Parker, Dryml e.f.
heat 4	Schofield, Barth, Gunnestad, Milik, Parker, Berge.
heat 5	Tatum, Diener, Gerhard, Hurry, Dryml, Maier - no finish.
heat 6	Riss, Wigg, Crump, Brhel, Muller, van der Helm.
heat 7	Diener, Parker, Berge, van der Helm, Muller, Hurry.
heat 8	Gerhard, Barth, Crump, Milik, Brhel, Tatum e.f.
heat 9	Riss, Maier, Dryml, Wigg, Schofield, Gunnestad.
Semi-Final heat 10	Riss, Barth, Tatum, Schofield, Crump, Milik.
Semi-Final heat 11	Diener, Gerhard, Maier, Wigg, Parker, Berge.
Grand Final	Riss, Diener, Tatum, Barth, Gerhard, Maier.

1st	Gerd Riss	Germany	5 5 5 5 5	25
2nd	Bernd Diener	Germany	5 4 5 5 4	23
3rd	Robert Barth	Germany	4 4 4 4 2	18
4	Marcel Gerhard	Switzerland	4 3 5 4 1	17
5	Kelvin Tatum	England	5 5 ef 3 3	16
6	Karl Maier	Germany	4 n.f 4 3 0	11
7	Simon Wigg	England	3 4 2 2	11
8	Steve Schofield	England	0 5 1 2	8
9	Jason Crump	Australia	1 3 3 1	8
10	Shane Parker	Australia	1 1 4 1	7
11	Phillipe Berge	France	3 0 3 0	6
12	Vaclav Milik	CZ	2 2 2 0	6
13	Egon Muller	Germany	3 1 1	5
14	Bohumil Brhel	CZ	2 2 1	5
15	Ales Dryml	CZ	e.f 1 3	4
16	Anne van der Helm	Holland	2 0 2	4
17	Lars Gunnestad	Norway	e.f 3 0	3
18	Paul Hurry	England	1 2 0	3
res	Sergej Eroshin	Russia	d.n.r	
res	Walter Scherwitzki	Germany	d.n.r	
res	Zdenek Schneiderwind	CZ	d.n.r	