

Bernhard Eggenschwiler's triumphal victory

Freak weather presented particular challenges to the approximately 2,800 runners in the 34th Swissalpine. Bernhard Eggenschwiler and Luzia Bühler spectacularly asserted themselves in the recently held T88 from St. Moritz to Davos.

Bernhard Eggenschwiler is the king of the 34th Swissalpine. After dominating the K43 in the prologue in the Upper Engadine on 20 July, he triumphed a week later at the finish in Davos at the end of the T88 after a spectacular and at times even dramatic race. Eggenschwiler compared his double victory to winning the lottery. At first, there had been nothing in the 84.9 kilometre-long T88 with a total of 3,640 metres of ascent and 3,877 metres of descent from St. Moritz via the Stazerwald, Pontresina, Muottas Muragl, Samedan, Val Bever, Fuorcla Crap Alv, Bergün, Darlux, Alp digl Chant, Keschhütte and the Sertig Pass to Davos to indicate the fantastic success of the 34-year old Aargau resident. Although Eggenschwiler had worked his way up to the 2nd position by the 45th kilometre after a deliberately careful start, he was still lagging 17 minutes behind defending champion Tofol Castanyer in Bergün. Tempestuous thunderstorms and the cold weather subsequently led to the coup. While the Majorcan temporarily collapsed, Eggenschwiler turned on the heat. The Aargau resident, who describes mountain runs as his strength, was alone when passing the Keschhütte at the top. Although also suffering from the adverse weather conditions, he still mastered the trying course in an impressive 9:02:07 hours. Castanyer forfeited 10:52 minutes. Lagging behind by three quarters of an hour in third place came Sascha Hosennen.

Luzia Bühler made the biggest impact among the women in the T88. The 37-year old Flims resident didn't decide to take part until Friday, thus registering at the last minute early on Saturday morning just before the start in St. Moritz at 6 am. After a careful start, and even after several falls resulted in grazes, she refused to be deterred from her successful attack and reached the finish in 10:20:42 hours. Only seven men mastered the trying 84.9 kilometres faster than Bühler.

Just like Eggenschwiler, Corina Hengartner managed to chalk up a double victory in this year's Swissalpine. The 41-year old triathlon specialist had won the T29 in the prologue in the Engadine. A week later the St. Gallen resident asserted herself on the K43 (42.7 km, 1,424 m altitude difference), starting and finishing in Davos via the Scaletta Pass, the panorama trail and the Sertig Pass in 4:04:16 hours, coming before Herisau resident Lena Steuri. She countered the cold by means of a tried and trusted method: "Just keep on racing." Among the men, the K43 remained the domain of Stephan Wenk. After winning two years ago and coming second place twelve months ago, the Zurich resident practically managed a start-finish-victory in 3:18:10 hours on Saturday.

The Swissalpine Irontrail will be undergoing decisive changes next year. A mountain run, starting and finishing in Davos and stretching over approximately 70 kilometres, will be launched on 25 July 2010 as successor to the popular K78, which was discontinued in 2017. It leads into Sertigtal, continues on to Monstein, Fanezfürgga, Sertig Pass, Scaletta Pass and the Dischma Valley and back to the starting point in Davos. Conversely, the Irontrail scene will be shifting to the Engadine. The highlight will be the premiere of a "100-miler" starting in St. Moritz and finishing in Samedan. The initial clarifications regarding the implementation date as well as the routing of the various competitions are presently ongoing. The Irontrail programme will be communicated as soon as the clarifications have been concluded.