

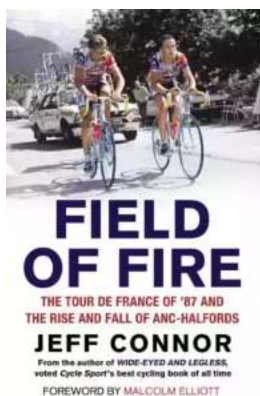
The Tour De France of '87: An Epic Battle and the Rise and Fall of ANC Halfords

In the summer of 1987, the Tour De France witnessed one of the most dramatic and memorable editions in its history. It was a battle not only between cyclists but also a clash of sponsorships, with ANC Halfords making headlines for their unprecedented rise and fall in the world of professional cycling. This is the untold story of the Tour De France of '87 and the rollercoaster journey of ANC Halfords.

The Birth of ANC Halfords

ANC Halfords, a British-based amateur cycling team, saw an opportunity to make a mark on the international stage by participating in the prestigious Tour De France. The team was an underdog, with limited resources and experience in professional racing. However, they had a passionate and determined leader in Tony Capper.

Capper, the team's director, managed to secure financial backing from Halfords, a leading British retailer specializing in car parts and bicycle accessories. This sponsorship was a game-changer for ANC Halfords, allowing them to compete against some of the world's best professional teams in the Tour De France.



Field of Fire: The Tour de France of '87 and the Rise and Fall of ANC-Halfords

by Jeff Connor (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3011 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length	: 256 pages
Screen Reader	: Supported
Paperback	: 144 pages
Item Weight	: 7.5 ounces
Dimensions	: 5 x 0.33 x 8 inches



An Unexpected Journey Begins

The Tour De France, starting in West Berlin that year, was grueling and demanding. With 198 riders representing 22 teams, ANC Halfords faced immense competition. The team consisted of seasoned British riders like Malcolm Elliott, Paul Watson, Adrian Timmis, and Colin Sturgess, who were eager to prove themselves on the international stage.

Despite being the underdogs, ANC Halfords surprised everyone with their tenacity and determination. Malcolm Elliott, the team's star sprinter, showcased his exceptional skills by winning the coveted green jersey in the points classification, beating legends of the sport like Sean Kelly and Jean-Paul van Poppel.

The team's success did not end there. Paul Watson, a young rider with immense talent, demonstrated his climbing abilities in the treacherous Alpine stages. He managed to secure a top-ten finish in several mountainous stages, earning him the respect of his peers and the admiration of cycling enthusiasts worldwide.

The Fall from Grace

ANC Halfords' impressive performance in the Tour De France of '87 generated tremendous publicity and a newfound reputation. However, their journey took a sharp turn after the race concluded.

Financial troubles plagued the team, and Halfords decided to withdraw their sponsorship. The sudden loss of support meant ANC Halfords was unable to continue competing at the highest level. Riders were left with limited options, forcing some to retire prematurely from professional cycling.

The disbandment of ANC Halfords served as a stark reminder of the harsh realities of professional sports, where success and failure are often intertwined with financial stability.

Legacy and Lessons Learned

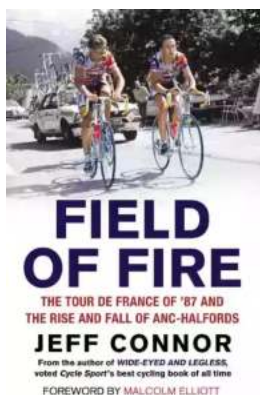
Although ANC Halfords' story ended on a sour note, their presence in the Tour De France of '87 left an indelible mark. They showcased the spirit of underdogs, proving that determination and passion can overcome even the most formidable opponents.

The rise and fall of ANC Halfords served as a valuable lesson to the world of cycling. Sponsors and financial stability play a crucial role in enabling teams to compete at the highest level. It shed light on the challenges faced by smaller and less-established teams in their pursuit of success.

Decades later, the story of ANC Halfords continues to inspire young riders and remind them of the importance of resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity.

The Tour De France of '87 witnessed the rise and fall of ANC Halfords, a team that defied the odds and captured the hearts of cycling enthusiasts worldwide. Their remarkable journey, both on and off the bike, reminds us of the passion and dedication that drives athletes to push their limits.

While ANC Halfords may be a footnote in the history of professional cycling, their legacy lives on as a testament to the unpredictability and volatility of sports. The Tour De France of '87 will forever be remembered as a battlefield where dreams were shattered and new heroes emerged, leaving an everlasting impact on the world of cycling.



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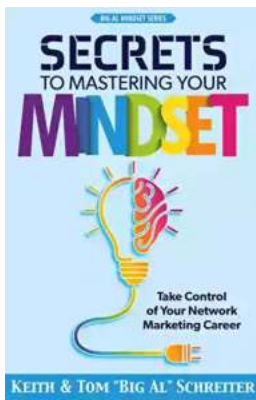


In 1987, a British-based team competed in the Tour de France for the first time in almost two decades. The ANC-Halfords squad were decimated by the punishing pace, the manager walked out during one of the Alpine stages, five of the nine riders and some of the staff never made it to Paris, and most of the personnel went unpaid. ANC were the definitive innocents abroad and it became one of the great sporting misadventures of all time.

If that wasn't bad enough for ANC, a tabloid journalist travelled with them for the full three weeks. Jeff Connor's account of the Tour, *Wide-Eyed and Legless*,

became a classic and was later voted number one in Cycle Sport's list of the best cycling books of all time.

Now, 25 years on, Connor revisits the scene of the crime, tracks down the participants and discovers exactly how their fortunes were changed, some irrevocably, by the '87 Tour. Field of Fire tells a moving tale of sporting disillusionment, heartbreak, anger - and humour.



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