

NISSAN INTERNATIONAL CLASSIC

BY KEITH BINGHAM

What the Nissan International Classic (September 28-October 2) needs this year is a nice little upset from a renegade team not prepared to let Sean Kelly get away with a yawning fourth victory in a row.

This is not to demean Kelly the Irish legend, for his achievements are legion. But the opposition might at least put up a decent fight and try and stop him, unlike last year, when Kelly, and Ireland's other favourite son, Stephen Roche, paraded around Ireland like kings returned from battle to enjoy the rapturous welcome from tens of thousands of home supporters.

Apart from individuals like triple-stage winner Malcolm Elliott, lone-break hero and stage winner Sean Yates and mountains winner Chris Lillywhite, the rest just went through the motions. They made a few attacks here, a short break there, textbook stuff, and though they were flat out in the last hour it was too late to change anything. We got staged racing, not stage racing.

So come on Steve Bauer, captain of the Weinmann-La Suisse team, go for it with the same determination you showed at your disastrous world championship. But minus the physical stuff that put Criquelion on the deck and got you disqualified. The Irish might not be so tolerant as the Belgians.

Bauer, beaten on the last day by Kelly in the 1986 Nissan, has enjoyed his best season ever. As a yellow jersey holder in the Tour de France and fourth overall, his higher profile might encourage him to try and tip the Nissan apple cart all over the road.

Bauer certainly has a good team with him, including Holland's Gerhard Veldscholten, winner of the Tour of Romandie in May, plus Niki Ruttiman, the Swiss winner of two stages in the Dauphine Libere where he was second overall.

Another who could score is Australia's Phil Anderson, winner of the recent Tour of Denmark. On good form this year, he was very disappointed when his Dutch TVM team could not ride the Tour de France. He needs to win again this year to make up for that. Andersen won two stages of the 1986 Nissan.

There is Tour de France stage winner Rolf Gölz of Superconfex, the team which dominated the flatter stages of the Tour. And Edwig Van Hooydonck is another of their strong men.

Ronan Pensec of the Z-Peugeot team, seventh overall and best Frenchman in the Tour de France, needs a powerful formation. Backing him is Liverpool's Joey McLoughlin, the points winner in the recent Kellogg's Tour of Britain, plus Adrian Timmis, fifth overall in the 1986 Nissan.

MAKE KELLY FIGHT FOR IT



Sean Kelly wearing the yellow jersey of race leader climbs through the crowds cramming the narrow mountain roads during the Nissan Classic. Picture by Photosport International.

Also in the team is Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle, the big Frenchman whose lone, fearless escape down the Tourmalet in this year's Tour was then matched by his remarkable ascent to hold off race leader Pedro Delgado and take second place at the Luz Ardiden finish.

Some might say it is Roche's turn to win the Nissan. He certainly has the firepower in his Fagor team, notably the tireless

Yates, not to mention Elliott this year's Tour of Britain winner.

Elliott at least did upset the home fans by beating Kelly in every town sprint in the man's home area last year, besides three times denying the local hero a stage win. And there is Robert Millar, but this climber and former Tour de France mountains winner, may not find any hills worth speaking of in

this Nissan. Unfortunately, Eddy Schepers, Roche's right-hand man, is not riding.

And so to Kelly and his Kas team. He is backed by Acacio Da

Silva, the Portuguese who won a stage of the Tour de France plus French road champion, Eric Caritoux, Swiss star Thomas Wegmuller who won a stage of the recent Kellogg's Tour of Britain and fellow Irishman Martin Earley.

It is a line-up as strong as he could wish for. So will Kelly rule again? If he can win Paris-Nice seven times in a row then the answer must be yes, he can take his fourth Nissan. But don't hand it to him on a plate - make him work for it.

Last year the one factor that prevented critics shouting "fix," was that neither Kelly nor Roche won a stage. It was almost as if the riders were saying, OK, Sean, we are not challenging you too strongly for the overall - it's been a long season. But you've got a fight on your hands if you want a stage victory. And in the finishing sprints we did see some exciting racing.

If all else fails this year, that's where the action will come again, especially with Kelly's old sprinting rival Eric Vanderaerden of the Panasonic team and Eddy Planckaert of ADR both riding. And Paris-Roubaix winner Dirk Demol also rides.

Of the British home teams entered, sprinter Mark Walsham of the Percy Bilton team will be to the fore in the sprints, while Lillywhite will lead Raleigh-Banana's challenge which will centre on his bid to retain his mountain's title.

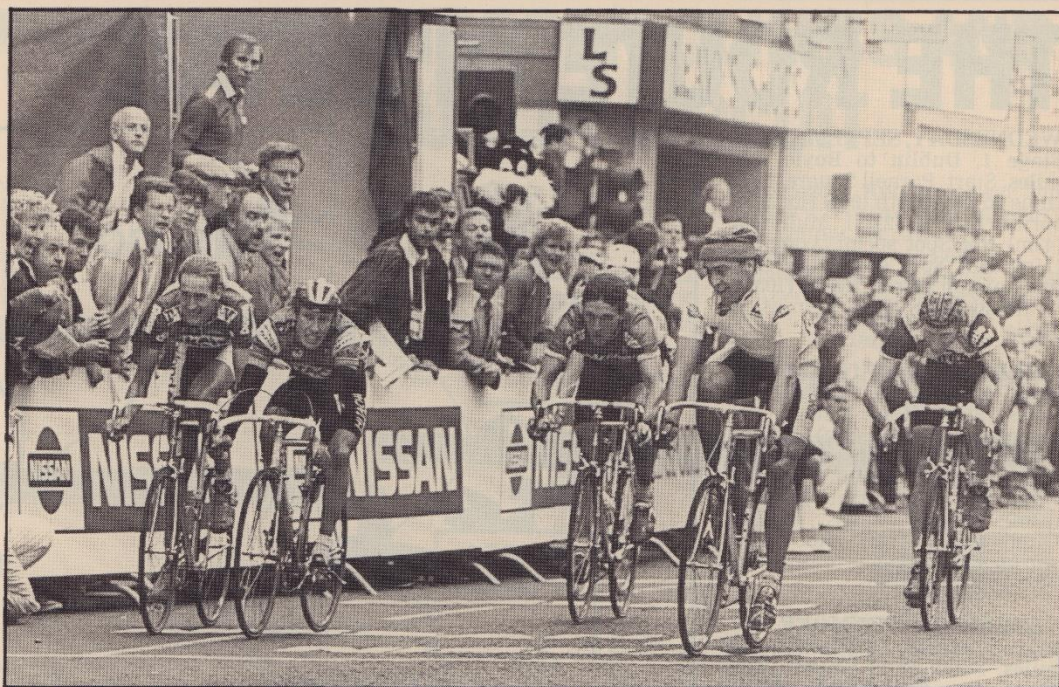
British road champion Steve Joughin will be out to make his mark in the sprint finishes too, after crashing out of the Kellogg's Tour.

So if the overall race is sewn up early, as it was when the Kelly break took command on stage two last year, the betting man who enjoys a gamble should study sprinting form. You've got Vanderaerden, Planckaert and McLoughlin vying for the best hair-raising sprint, plus Elliott, Kelly, Da Silva, Capiot, Van Hooydonck, Bauer, Anderson, Walsham and Joughin trying to cut through the pack as well.

The opening stage from Dublin to Boyle is flat, with three climbs on the finishing circuit at Boyle. The second stage through Conamara is comparatively flat as well, a sprinter's benefit all the way to Galway. Stage three offers a series of small hills before the "big one" over Silvermines mountain after 85 miles, and then a flat run to Limerick 25 miles away, where the biggest crowds are expected.

Stage four offers three mountain climbs, Gallows Hill at close on 1,000-feet is the highest only 14 miles after the start from Shannon. Then the route takes in Limerick, to give the previous day's crowds another sight of the spectacles as it heads for Cork.

The final stage is around Dublin, finishing with a 10 laps of the O'Connell Street circuit.



Malcolm Elliott, second from right, wins in Limerick in the 1987 Nissan

TEAMS AND RIDERS

KAS

- 1, Sean Kelly
- 2, Martin Earley
- 3, Eric Caritoux
- 4, Acacio Da Silva
- 5, Thomas Wegmuller

FAGOR

- 6, Stephen Roche
- 7, John Carlen
- 8, Malcolm Elliott
- 9, Robert Millar
- 10, Sean Yates

RALEIGH-BANANA

- 11, Chris Lillywhite
- 12, Steve Douce
- 13, Tim Harris
- 14, Dave Mann
- 15, Chris Walker

WEINMANN-LA SUISSE

- 16, Steve Bauer
- 17, Jean-Claude Leclercq
- 18, Henri Manders
- 19, Niki Ruttiman
- 20, Gerard Veldschoten

IRELAND AMATEUR

- 21, Gary Thomson
- 22, Ian Chivers
- 23, Julian Dalby
- 24, Chris McCann
- 25, Ray Ronan

RMO

- 26, Paul Kimmage
- 27, Jean-Claude Colotti
- 28, Alex Pedersen
- 29, Piers Pedersen
- 30, Michel Vermote

ADR

- 31, Eddy Planckaert
- 32, Frank Hoste
- 33, Janus Kuum
- 34, Dirk Demol
- 35, Pol Verschuere

EMMELLE-MBK

- 36, Simon Cope
- 37, Graham Jones
- 38, Neil Martin
- 39, Ian Fagan
- 40, Keith Reynolds

SUPERCONFEX

- 41, Rolf Golz
- 42, Edwig van Hooydonck
- 43, Gerrit Solleveld
- 44, Nico Verhoeven
- 45, Arjan Jagt

HOLLAND AMATEUR

- 46, Richard Mulder
- 47, Arno Ottenvanger
- 48, Harry Rozendal
- 49, Joost Van Adrichem
- 50, Jan Willem Van Loenhout

PANASONIC

- 51, Eric Vanderaerden
- 52, Theo DeRooy
- 53, Allan Peiper
- 54, John Talen
- 55, Peter Winnen

SCOTLAND AMATEUR

- 56, Martin Coll
- 57, Andy Matheson
- 58, Neil McLeod
- 59, Brian Smith
- 60, Andy Young

Z-PEUGEOT

- 61, Ronan Pensec
- 62, Gilbert Duclos-Lasalle
- 63, Bruno Cornillet
- 64, Joey McLoughlin
- 65, Adrian Timmis

PDM

- 66, Adri Van der Poel
- 67, Greg Lemond

- 68, Rudy Dhaenens
- 69, Dag-Eric Pedersen
- 70, Marc Van Orsouw

PERCY BILTON

- 71, Rob Holden
- 72, John Herety
- 73, Ian Sanders
- 74, Steve Sefton
- 75, Mark Walsham

TOSHIBA

- 76, Jean-Francois Bernard
- 77, Martial Gayant
- 78, Andreas Kappes
- 79, Johan Lammerts
- 80, Pascal Poisson

MICHELIN HI-LITES

- 81, Alan Gornall
- 82, Tony James
- 83, Jack Kershaw
- 84, Dave Miller
- 85, Russell Williams

TVM-TNT

- 86, Phil Anderson
- 87, John Capiot
- 88, Ludo De Keulenaere
- 89, Peter Pieters
- 90, John Van de Velde

EVER READY-AMMACO

- 91, Phil Bayton
- 92, Glenn Clarke
- 93, Gary Coltman
- 94, Steve Joughin
- 95, Jon Walshaw

PMS-DAWES

- 96, Shane Sutton
- 97, Jon Clay
- 98, Steve Jones
- 99, John Wainwright
- 100, Darryl Webster

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THE ROUTE IN DETAIL

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

Stage 1, Dublin to Boyle, 115 miles. Start: Parnell Square. Continue to Maynooth (9m) Hot Spot sprint, Enfield (21m), Mullingar (43m) Hot Spot sprint, Longford (71m) Hot Spot sprint, Carrick-on-Shannon (93m), Boyle (103m) to finish after three circuits in Boyle.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Stage 2, Sligo to Galway, 149 miles. Start: Wine Street. Continue to Coolaney (5m), Ballina (39m) Hot Spot sprint, Castlebar (62m) Hot Spot sprint, Westport (73m) Hot Spot sprint, Leenane (93m), Haam Cross (107m), Oughterard (117m) Hot Spot sprint, Barna (134m) to finishing circuit for three laps.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

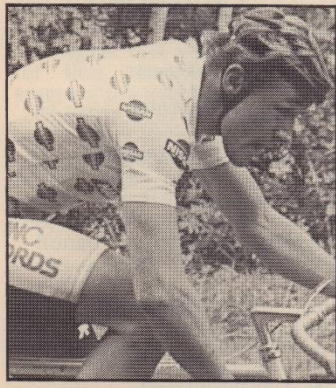
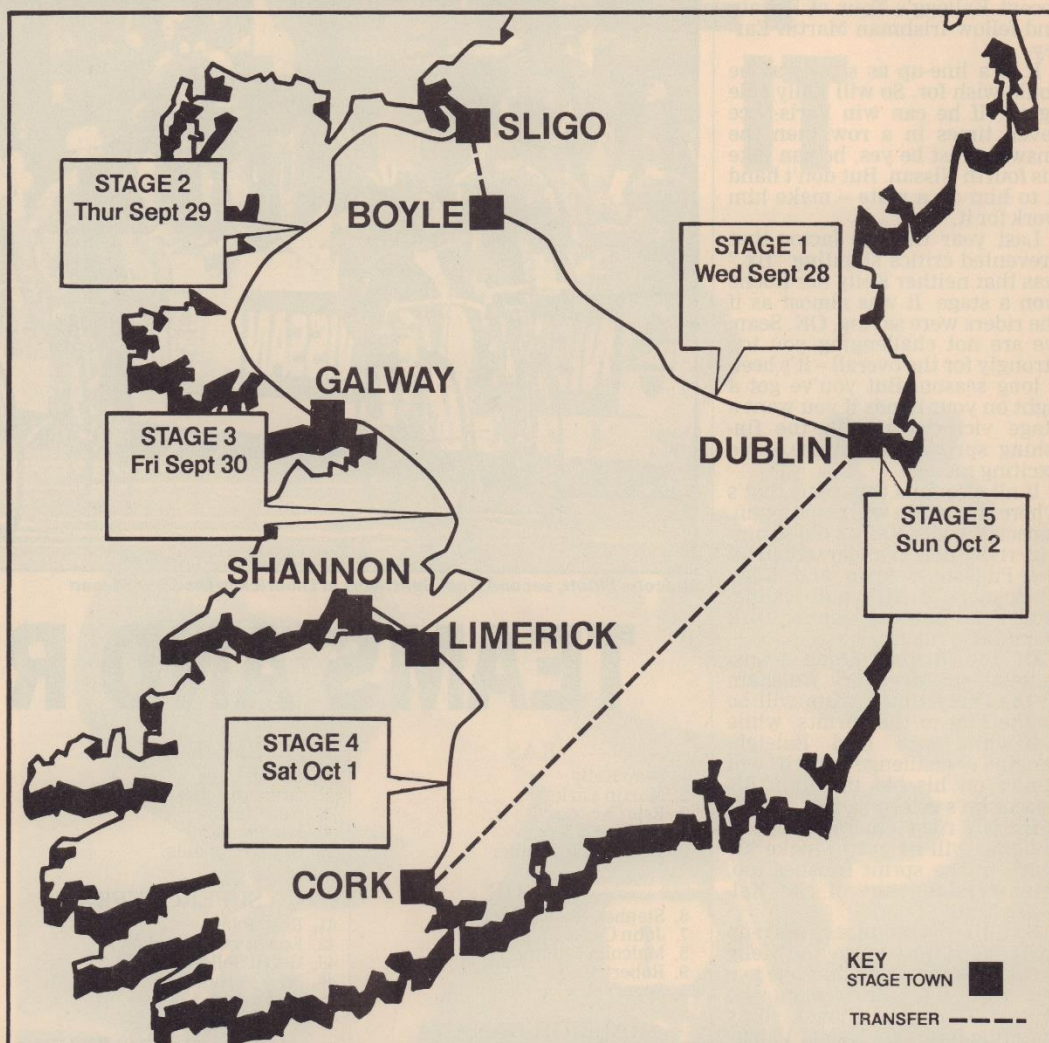
Stage 3, Galway to Limerick, 126 miles. Start: Eyre Square. Continue to Craughwell (12m), Loughrea (19m) Hot Spot sprint, Woodford (34m), Mountshannon (47m), Scariff (52m), Nenagh (76m) Hot Spot, Silvermines (82m), Limerick (110m) three laps of finishing circuit.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1

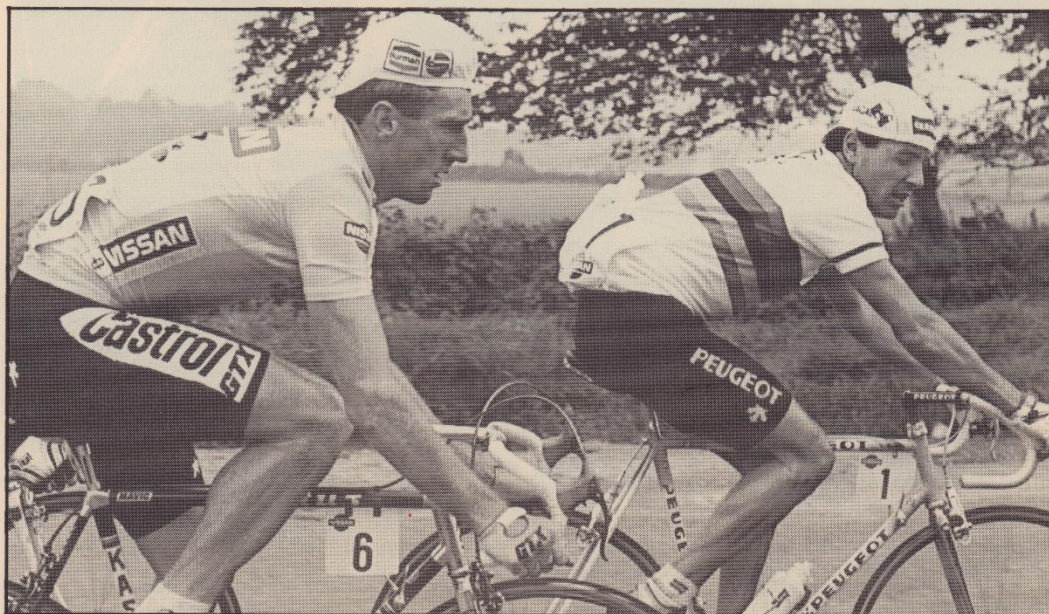
Stage 4, Shannon to Cork, 111 miles. Start: Shannon Free Zone. Continue to Bunratty (6m), Cratloe (9m), Limerick (20m) Hot Spot sprint, Tipperary Town (46m) Hot Spot sprint, Galbally (59m), Mitchelstown (69m) Hot Spot sprint, Fermoy (79m) Hot Spot sprint, Cork (99m) three laps of finishing circuit to finish in the South Mall.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2

Stage 5, Dublin Millennium Stage, 83 miles. Start: O'Connell Street. Continue to Shankill (7m), Dalkey (11m), Blackrock (15m), Merrion Gate (17m) Hot Spot sprint, Sutton Cross (27m), Howth (29m) circuit covered three times, Sutton Cross (54m), Malahide (58m), Swords (62m), Whitehall (68m), Drumcondra (69m), 10 laps of 1.3 miles O'Connell Street, Parnell Square finishing circuit.



Chris Lillywhite was the best climber in the 1987 Nissan



The 1987 Nissan - and second-placed Stephen Roche leads winner Sean Kelly.

28th SEPTEMBER 1988



Howth, 1st category (four times).

29th SEPTEMBER 1988



SEPT 28 - OCT 2 / 1988

