

Record Attempt – Rider's Summary

Attempted Record: Point-to-Point Record, Switzerland East – West
Rider: Eliane Zimmermann
Date: May 29 & 30, 2021

Start: Border Station Martina, Graubunden, Switzerland
Saturday, 29 May 2021, 15:00 CET

Finish: Border Station Chancy, Geneva, Switzerland
Sunday, 30 May 2021, 09:43 CET

Distance: 502 km
My GPS showed 499.5 km. There were some lost signal passages through tunnels

Time Needed: 18 hours, 43 minutes

Officials: Michael Lehmann, Cyrill Kobler

Crew: Andreas Gygax, Lorenz Eggenschwiler, Arlette Sommer, Rebecca Roggo

Before 2020, I was not aware of the WUCA list of possible records. However, due to the effects of the Corona pandemic with cancelled races and limitations to cross-border travels, I read about the record attempts of Simon Ruff and Herbert Zahner. I started to read more about the record possibilities and requirements. Also, I realized that no woman had so far attempted the record. Therefore, I kept the possibility of a record attempt in the back of my mind.

For April and May, I had 2 officials ultracycling races planned. The Race Across Italy at the end of April and the Race Across Belgium in mid-May 2021. Planning and training for those 2 races proved difficult with the strict Corona restrictions and lockdowns. Therefore, I decided to not start at either race and concentrate on the point-to-point record attempt. This decision proved to be the right one as both races were later on postponed. With the point-to-point record attempt, I had a goal with a fixed date and a clear timeline and focus for my training.

The date we set to do the record attempt was May 29, 2021. We selected the date based on availability of the support crew and also due to considerations of the Fluela Pass being open after the winter closing. It turned out, that we selected the best weekend by far to do the ride. For weeks, the weather was quite miserable with a lot of rain and also with a lot of wind coming from the West. For the fastest route from East (Martina) to West (Chancy near Geneva), we selected the route over Fluela Pass, then down to Landquart, along Lake Walensee and Lake Zurich to Zurich City, then all along the Jura Mountains to Yverdon, then the crossing over the Lake Geneva and all along the lake into the city and then to the border at Chancy. The selection of this route meant 300 km from Zurich to Geneva all heading west. Therefore, strong winds from the West would have slowed the ride considerably.

Fortunately, the weather was by far the best on our selected weekend. We started at 15:00 on May 29, 2021. The weather was a bit overcast, temperatures around 12 degrees in Martina. During the first part of the ride and all the way to Lake Walensee, we faced headwind. They were especially strong going up Fluela Pass. It was a cold and windy ascent to the top and the temperatures were around 0 degrees Celsius. Therefore, we headed into the descent quickly and made our way to Klosters, where I changed bikes. I started with a Argon 18 Gallium Pro Disc for the ascent and descent of the Fluela Pass. In Klosters, I switched to an Argon 18 Nitrogen with triathlon extensions on the handlebar. With this bike, I rode the rest of the way to Chancy.

I faced headwinds all the way to the beginning of Lake Zurich. Due to the later hours on Saturday, we did not face much traffic, except through the city of Zurich. Turning west after leaving Zurich, I was finally able to profit from the first, slight tailwinds. However, I also started to feel a bit nauseous and this pulled me into a bit of a challenging, mental couple of hours. Up to that point, I could adhere strictly to my race diet consisting of solely WinForce products. Carbo Basic Plus for the liquid energy

intake and Ultra Energy Gels for the more solid energy intake. Additionally, I used WinForce Boosters for periods of fatigue and to get an extra shot of caffeine. Even though my stomach did not feel so great, my legs were still strong and we made our way quickly through the night and towards Geneva. Shortly before Biel, I had a flat tire, but my support team exchanged the back wheel quickly and I could continue my ride. While the tailwinds were moderate during the night, they started to get stronger in the Yverdon region. However, on the hilly course from Yverdon to Rolle at the border of Lake Geneva, they were not much of an advantage. While I was riding in the flat for several hours, the constant up and down between Yverdon and Rolle took a lot of energy out of my legs, but the nearing finish line kept my motivation up. The ride along Lake Geneva was smooth and after a stop and go across the city of Geneva, we reached the border at Chancy at 09:43 CET on Sunday morning, May 30, 2021.

The point-to-point record attempt was a complete success in any part possible. Aside from a mentally challenging period of time during the night, I felt well prepared and the legs worked just fine. I felt at any time well supported by my team and it was a great joy to have them at my side and share the experience and adventure. Even though I am all by myself on the bike, I do truly believe ultracycling is a team sport and it is just that much more fun and special in a team surrounding. Also, my support team made it possible for me to attempt this record and I am very grateful to them. Aside from the team experience, the most precious moments and memories is not the time achieved, but the beautiful landscape and sceneries along the way. The ascent to the Fluela Pass was hard and cold, but still beautiful in its own way. I will also fondly remember the wonderful sunset while I was riding alone and along Lake Walensee on the bike path, where my team could not follow me. Having those moments all to myself was very fulfilling and established a calmness within myself and I knew that doing this record attempt was the right decision. Also memorable are the night rides, as always. On one hand, they are tough in its own way, but they can also be great. Riding with higher speeds during empty cities and streets was a pure feeling of joy, happiness and freedom. And during the night hours, you start to feel excited for the sunrise and the warmth of a starting day. The sunrise was nothing less than spectacular and it gave new energy to tackle the last few kilometers and hours. And last but not least, I am grateful that we all made it back home safely. This fact alone should never be underestimated.

Thank you to the 2 officials: Michael Lehmann, Cyrill Kobler, and to my support team / crew: Andreas Gygax, Lorenz Eggenschwiler, Arlette Sommer, Rebecca Roggo.