

VERBIER, Switzerland (AP) - When Alberto Contador launched his bold attack in the final ascent, it was reminiscent of Lance Armstrong's golden years.

The fast pedaling was the same, the determination was the same, but it was a different rider on the saddle - the American's Spanish teammate, already one of the sport's greatest at the age of 26.

Contador dominated all other Tour contenders on Sunday's first Alpine stage from Pontarlier, France, on the Swiss ski resort of Verbier, with a move ignited less than six kilometers from the finish line that gave him the leader's yellow jersey he wanted more than anything else.

As he already did it last week in the Pyrenees, the 2007 Tour winner showed he has no rival in the mountains and took a serious option on a second victory in cycling's showcase event.

"Lance Armstrong was my idol, but

were over. "A day like this really shows who's the best, and I wasn't on par with what's required to win the Tour. So for me, that's the reality, that's not devastating news or anything."

Armstrong moved up to second place in the standings after the 15th stage, but lost precious time to Contador, who took control of the race as he ended Rinaldo Nocentini's eight-day run in the overall lead. Armstrong trails Contador by 1 minute, 37 seconds in the overall standings. Former track cycling specialist Bradley Wiggins climbed from sixth place to third, 1:46 back.

Even if Armstrong conceded Contador's superiority, his pride has not been completely washed up. Just a few minutes after crossing the line, his all-consuming ambition reappeared when he hinted that he could maybe win another Tour next year.

"I think being out for four years,

and Italy - seems so strong that only an accident could deprive him of victory. Or maybe a bad day like the one he experienced earlier this season on the Paris-Nice race that cost him a victory which was reaching out to him.

Andy Schleck of Luxembourg was second, 43 seconds back on the short but steep ascent to Verbier, while defending champion Carlos Sastre and two-time runner-up Cadel Evans lost more time.

Schleck is now 5th overall, 2 minutes, 26 seconds back. Sastre lags in 11th position, 3:52 behind, and Evans is 4:27 off the pace.

"Today we saw that Alberto was the strongest - he took off like a rocket and I couldn't catch him," Schleck said. "I tried to fi -

low when he attacked, but I saw I wasn't getting any closer. After that I tried to cut my losses and head the rest behind me."

Armstrong's rivalry with Contador, on ice during last week's mostly flat stages, was set to re-ignite in Verbier.

Contador said Sunday's result left no doubt about who should be considered the Astana team leader.

"The differences now are pretty big, and the team's bet should now be me, no?" Contador said. "I'm sure my teammates are going to put in great work to back me up just like they did today!"

Armstrong promised to put his own goals on the back burner for the good of his team, which has three riders in the Tour Top 5 - Contador, Armstrong and fourth-placed Andreas Klöden.

"Now it's clear that we have the strongest rider in the race.

This is a team sport, so you can't - none of us, Andreas or myself - can think about ourselves," Armstrong said.

"Overall, if we play it really, really smart, we can have three

guys in the top five and the guy who wins.

That's a special opportunity, but you know, I think now is the time for me to put my chances aside, and focus on the team."

Riders get a rest day on Monday before the two other Alpine stages, an individual

Armstrong finds his master on Tour

dropping him today wasn't important - he was just like any other rider ... It's an honor for me to have him working for me," the new "boss" of the Tour said after his triumph.

During his seven-year reign on the race from 1999 and 2005, Armstrong always used hilltop finishes to stamp his domination. This time the Texan was unable to follow the insane pace imposed by Contador, whose legs are 11 years fresher than Armstrong's.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm happy to be his domestique," a fatalistic Armstrong said. "I'm proud of him."

Last week in the Pyrenees, Armstrong criticized Contador following an attack which allowed the Spaniard to leapfrog him. The Texan then accused his teammate on the Astana squad of riding against its strategy and even hinted that he could have followed him if he had really wanted to.

It was a different story after the final, 8.8-kilometer (5.5-mile) ascent to Verbier, where Armstrong fully understood that he couldn't compete. The cancer survivor, back on the Tour four years after his last victory, accepted his chance of victory is minimal.

"Yeah, it will be hard," Armstrong said when asked if his chances to win the race

and being one of the older guys out here, there might be people out there that expect me to ride like I did in 2004, 2005 - that's not reality," Armstrong said. "If I do another year, and I get a season under my belt, maybe we get that race condition back."

"But right now I don't have it," added Armstrong, who finished ninth, 1 minute, 35 seconds after the Spaniard.

Armstrong has previously said he may launch his own team next season, while Contador is likely to quit Astana for another team.

Contador, one of only five riders to have triumphed in the three Grands Tours - France, Spain



Alberto Contador of Spain, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, reacts on the podium after the 15th stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 207.5 kilometers (129 miles) with start in Pontarlier, France and finish in Verbier, Switzerland, Sunday July 19, 2009.

(AP Photo/Bas Czerwinski)

Henry Surtees dies from head injuries in F2 race



Henry Surtees

BRANDS HATCH, England (AP) - Henry Surtees, the son of 1964 Formula One champion John Surtees, has died after being struck in the head during an F2 race on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Surtees was knocked unconscious after being hit by a tire from another car, causing his car to crash into a barrier in the second of the weekend's races at Brands Hatch.

He was airlifted to Royal London hospital, where he later pronounced dead.

Surtees, who finished third in Saturday's opening race for his first F2 podium finish, had started in F3 last year.

His father is the only man to have won world titles on both two and four wheels, claiming multiple 500cc motorcycle world championships before winning the F1 title with Ferrari.

Bravo breaks his silence on state of WI cricket



Dwayne Bravo

Team colours mean a lot to West Indies and Mumbai Indians' all-rounder Dwayne Bravo. During the inaugural edition of the Indian Premier League, he was told by a Mumbai Indians official at his hotel that he would have to brief the press before a key game. A slightly surprised Bravo agreed to perform his unexpected media duties and was soon surrounded by reporters. He excused himself, ran up to his room and came down fully attired with his team's attire.

People who realised the pride factor in him were highly impressed.

Bravo is not playing the current home series against Bangladesh due to a dispute between the West Indies board and the players' association. Indeed, he is a sad man as his young eyes watched a farcical cricket set-up.

He broke his silence recently in the Trinidad and Tobago Express where he slammed the Board for its unprofessional ways. He brought up the attire aspect in the final part of the interview: "They (the Board) just do things badly. They send guys on tour two days before a series and stuff like your uniform arriving late. My club, Queen's Park Cricket Club, is more organised than West Indies," he fumed.

Bravo illustrated a point about how the West Indies Players' association chief Dinanath Ramnarine has to perform duties which the Board officials ought to do. "If let's say I get a call-up to play for West Indies. I get to the airport, the ticket is there. There are times when you go to the airport and your ticket is not there. Then we call Ramnarine and he will buy a ticket. Sometimes you come back from tour and every time we travel we land in Barbados to get a connecting flight."

(MidDay)

Under-17 Division I Cricket

Kodikara century guides Petes to 100 run win

by Reemus Fernando

A century from Danushka Kodikara was the highlight as St Peter's College recorded a 100 run victory over Isipatana College in their Inter School Under-17 match played at Bambalapitiya, yesterday.

Kodikara top scored with 114, inclusive of 12 fours and a six for Petes to the post 269 runs.

Scores: St. Peter's 269 for 9 in 50 overs (Danushka Kodikara 114, Nilochana Perera 50, Denham Perera 33, Demian Paul 27; Gihan Nadeeshan 3/60, Samitha Sulochana 3/20)

Isipatana 169 for 9 in 50 overs (Harshaka Cooray 32, Irfan Raheem 30, Danushka Sandaruwan 30; Sidath Jayaweera 3/23, Tishan Fernando 2/28, Athif Mackie 2/29)

Bens rout Meepawala Amarasuriya

Meepawala Amarasuriya MV were bowled out for 75 runs as Arjuna Perera and Shamon Patterson picked up three wickets

each for St. Benedict's College to record a nine wicket victory in their Inter School Under-17 Division I match played at Kotahena, yesterday.

Scores: Meepawala Amarasuriya 75 all out in 32.3 overs (Sachin Minoj 2/22, Arjuna Perera 3/11, Shamon Patterson 3/07)

St. Benedict's 76 for 1 in 13.5 overs (Jeson Perera 37 n.o, Roy Sheran 24 n.o)

Joes in 8 wicket win

Kevin Bernadus cracked a quick 55 runs in 38 balls, inclusive of 11 fours and a six for St Joseph's College to score an eight wicket victory over Bandaranaika College in their Under-17 match played at Gampaha, yesterday.

Scores: Bandaranaika 141 all out in 46 overs (Kanishka Abeywardena 17, Malindu Perera 48; Dinal Dharmarage 3/17, Chathuranga

Kumara 3/31, Rosco Thattil 2/25) St. Joseph's 143 for 2 in 18.2 overs (Kevin Bernadus 55, Keshan Perera 25, Chathuranga Kumara 26 n.o)

Lumbini disappoint Madusanka

wicket haul from P. T. Madushan was in vain for Basilica College as Lumbini College scored a four wicket victory in their Under-17 match played at Ragama, yesterday.

Scores: Basilica 128 all out in 43 overs (A. Japar 46, V. Anthony 22, Vikum Sanjaya 2/44, Maduka Liyanapathirana 3/13, Ziman Osman 2/09)

Lumbini 131 for 6 in 39 overs (Kavija Sandaruwan 15, Damith Bandara 16, Maduka Liyanapathirana 43 n.o; Madushanka Lokuge 28 n.o; P.T. Madusanka 6/38)

Intikab exasperated by latest collapse

by Richard Browne

An exasperated Intikhab Alam, coach of Pakistan was at a loss to explain his side's latest batting collapse: All I can say is that we must keep on learning. Whether you have been in the game for two minutes or 20 years, you never stop learning and my team must look to maintain momentum when batting. Great sides do not collapse like we are doing at the moment.

Pakistan have suffered at the hands of the frequent ball changes that have punctuated the series, on this occasion the second new ball was not deviating off the straight, when Sri Lanka Sri Lanka skipper Kumar Sangakkara got the ball changed. Promptly, three wickets fell in quick succession, two too flat footed drives from Umar Gul and Misbah-ul-Huq that were as mistimed as they were uncalled for, with stumps approaching and a shiny new ball starting to swing.

Alam is too long in the tooth to be drawn into a potentially controversial discussion on the ball changes and realised that the recklessness of his batsmen had far more to do with his team's declining close of play position.

Alam was also frustrated once again by the running between the wickets, which saw Mohammad Yousuf involved in another comedy of errors, since inheriting the senior batsman tag from Inzamam-ul-Huq, he appears to be following his lead when it comes to judging a run. Alam admitted that Yousuf had felt obliged to apologise for his error.

Alam, who having picked two spinners would have batted first

was philosophical about Pakistan's position: We should be three or four wickets down, not seven, but runs on the board do count, and I am both hopeful and expectant that we can get to 400, which would give us something to bowl at. Kamen Akmal is a fan-tastic player and the tail must hang around to give him the support he needs.

Alam was confident that the wicket would help his spinners later in the game: Kaneria is a key bowler. We saw a few balls spin and bounce from the spinner today and I expect it to be really turning by day four. We just need to add another 100 runs and we are really in the game.

Thilan Thushara was the pick of the Sri Lankan bowlers and is benefitting from a continued run in the side. This is the first time I have played a whole series and it has given me a big boost. Kulasekara and myself are forming a partnership and I now feel a real part of the team, said Thushara.

This is my home ground and I know the wicket well. It is vital to get wickets with the new ball and I was very happy how I bowled with both the first and second new ball. The wicket was slower than predicted and the seam movement less pronounced, so it was a case of hitting a tight line and length today, something all the seamers did and we bowled as a unit said the home town boy.

Alonso travels with Liverpool for Thai friendly

BANGKOK (AP) - Liverpool midfielder Xabi Alonso has traveled with the team to its Asian friendlies on Monday amid intense speculation about his future.

Real Madrid and Inter Milan are thought to be interested in signing the Spain

international, but Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez gave nothing away Monday when asked whether he expected to retain Alonso.

Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher said Monday that he thought Liverpool may only need to improve by a slim

margin in the coming season to win the Premier League.

Liverpool will play Thailand's national team on Wednesday before another friendly in Singapore.