

Paris - Brest - Paris 2015 Bjorn Lenhard

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For the first time in Paris - Brest - Paris experience I had in 2011. I had just started with bicycle racing and prepared myself with a friend on the Fichkona. This then told me about the brevets which he would like to drive in preparation. So I came for the first time after Bennewitz and denied there a 200 and a 400. 2011 was just PBP - year and it went up so forth. For me, the 600km of Fichkona already exciting and challenging time were enough. The 1200km of Paris to the Atlantic coast and back I could imagine impossible at this time. How can you sit in the saddle for as long as is the food and drink plus the issue with the sleep - many questions? Nevertheless, I was fascinated by this event from the very first touch. Too much was told about PBP during the brevets. The stories and reports which I then read about it no longer let go of me - I was "hooked".

Since PBP takes place only every four years, I had enough time to prepare for it. Everything went fine this year, the Brevetserie was demolished and since I had completed a 1000km Brevet last year I was able to sign up at the beginning of the same. I really wanted to start in the starting block A at the very beginning so as little as possible to lose time at the controls on the way. Due to the experiences from the 1000s and also the 600 of this year I made a plan. Actually, he was pretty simple. A 30-section, I thought it possible, to a maximum of 15 minutes hold time at the controls, and no sleep. Makes everything of 44 hours and 15 minutes. Everything would be better is good, everything within 48 hours also, I told myself.

Added to this was of course still the question what is taken everything is there. Since PBP has 11000hm around makes additional weight in the long run, of course, extremely noticeable. The weather prospects were excellent. No rain, 10 - 23 ° C, a slight pinch from Northeast, Radler heart what you want more? So the raincoat was there, I wanted to not even Windstopper Jacket take (I would have done it once - it was driven unused 1200km walk) - that was me then but too hot. Spare clothes remained there, only the safety vest had to. So I had plenty of space in my handlebar bag and also in the three jersey pockets. The handlebar bag should it serve only as a pantry for food. Apart from the air pump, the seat cream and from the phone were in it at the start Isotonic supplements for bottles, all gel that had accumulated in the course of time with me, a bag of salted cashews and a whole baguette with Nutella. The two batteries of light and the Garmin I could attach to the stem, so needed no place in his pockets. Since the start at 16:00 clock was and it went straight into the night I drew a safety vest before the start of the same, only there was no time fritter go the motto. Thus, I had (yes is was one with the jacket and one with punch card and money) in the jersey pockets nor a specialist teacher. In this case even came to drink a bottle. Since it was not so warm should extend to the first control in Villaines la Juhel at kilometer 220 it so. The boarding point Mortagne at 140km I wanted to completely omit.

Thus equipped, we met for half an hour before the start at a velodrome. In the start block A (approximately 250 people) we were almost at the back. I did not actually so, but pending for over an hour for the best position I did not want to. It was already so enough excitement present. It was clear away time again of water and get an air pump, because I had forgotten in the final excitement again inflate air. So then we went up to the actual start ten minutes before the start out of the blocks out. Martin and Olaf I lost it the first time out of sight. After a speech it was time going at 16:00 clock. The launches in my previous Brevets went so far always very quiet. The organizer is the start character and the field shall be easy to move, no hassle, no jockeying for position. Most I drove forward in the wind and was then, if at all, on the road with only a few people. But what was going on here? I felt like a road race. Position battles, infighting - that was not really to my taste, and actually has nothing to look for in a Brevet. So it went the first 20 km after the leading vehicle manufactures high. Just do not rush to the numerous traffic islands I told myself, everything else is then already. When we were out of the suburbs of Paris and everything was released, it was a little quieter in the field. Nevertheless, we were very quick, a little too fast for my taste. Permanent drove anybody before the field, made a bit of pressure and a lot of back to back. No uniform gliding as I had experienced of group rides. This brought a lot of unrest into the field and you had to constantly watch. So I decided, contrary to my intentions, to stop me rather in the front part of the field. So I worked my way to the front and it was not long until I was the first time at the front. But it was hard work to be not equal passed backwards again. So passed the first kilometer, again and again the pace was attracted. My pulse went too often above 180, far too much at this point! But what the heck, the legs made it with loose and felt damn good at.

Before Mortagne by perhaps 100 km I saw then for the first time riders from the block B (started 15 minutes later) in the field. Wow, I had been there a smooth 35er section are on the clock! What are these types it went through my mind? This could indeed be funny. Also present was the five-time Race Across America (RAAM) - finisher Marko Baloh. Try to find him and hang on his wheel until you Paris, Roberts had words. I would have him here to find among so many people never thought of. We exchanged a few words and we were in the Directions for the aid station Mortagne. Here it was again her really hot, everyone wanted the best position to have come quickly to his meals. After that I drove on slowly, Martin joined back onto me. I was glad to see him again, I was afraid that he was suspended in the meantime. He also had a third bottle it and read the boarding point. Soon the field rolled back with decent speed. Again and again I went up front in the wind. It was easy for me, the legs were still loose. Again and again, I switched me with Mickael, a Frenchman who is also the first time was there from. With him I could entertain myself every now and then, he spoke very good English and also German. On the way to the first control I went but then so slowly the water out, the lucky (my water carrier) Martin was still in the process and he had drunk so much. I could have his third bottle of what I really helped. So we came to the first control at 220km in Villaines la Juhel. What I saw here shocked me her even more than the ride up here. Feels like almost all of the perhaps hundred-strong field had a support team here. The drivers, the wheel was literally ripped out of his hand upon arrival by a tutor. Then there was a sprint to the inspection body for stamping, in cycling shoes !!! Along the way, some drivers were stuck by a second supervisor for a few pieces of silver in the jersey pockets. Back out

were the wheels with full bottles stocked ready already. Except mine, I did not have anyone with the supplied me - "no support", as it said the French! To eat I had enough but my bottles were empty. No chance so on to drive so fast going and quickly filled up at the taps outside the bottle. When I came back my bike was the only still there. Leave Pretty and quiet it had become in the street. What the heck, I'm an hour before my schedule, the route is signposted, my navigator and light work, the weather is great. There is no reason to bury our heads in the sand. You can do that too all alone, I told myself. And so I sat back on the box and drove my pace. It was not long and I collected a driver for the next one. I was so seen the broom wagon behind the guide field. After about 15 kilometers I saw the first time the red lights from the leadership field. The immensely motivated and soon we entered into the field on. I had not previously experienced after expected. I rested down the field a little, but soon I got bored, it was too slow for my taste. So I went to the front again. I met Mickael again and I told him what I had experienced at the break. He told me that the next time you stop in Fougeres every 5 minutes wanted to take a break, so it was identified in the field. Fine, I thought, since I have yet another chance to ride with all going on. Unfortunately, the reality looked then again different. It ran all back on your heels for stamping, the same theater, as in the last break. Here I needed but also something to eat, the baguettes were all just gel there. When I arrived at the food stall and wanted to buy the first four Schokocroissants one was visibly surprised. I guess I was clearly too soon turn to this time only men were probably expected to support. After what felt like an eternity I was then but what I wanted, I lit the croissants Unters jersey, filled the bottles on and ran out. Again I was the only one who was still there. Well, you have done it once, you can do it well again and so I put off again. With a huge anger inside, I let rip. This time I had no desire to play broom wagon. I banged through the night. Here I overtook determined five people but had zero chances down with me as fast as I was. But it made a lot of fun, to me at least! The field was quickly rolled back. But this time I rested in the lee until the next break in Tinteniach at kilometer 363 of.

In Tinteniach I saw the thing a bit more relaxed. It makes no sense abzuhetzen and forgetting half if I am not always as fast as all other drivers. In peace I fetched my stamp and bought food. Again, completely surprised faces who had not long expected me again. Also outside you became aware of me as one of the support had not. A Belgian supervisor called me here to me to wait on his driver (who just turned onto) to second to continue to drive. Sorry, but someone who depends on me coattails and just want to enjoy my slipstream was the last thing I needed here. Under applause I left the control and drove the field again afterwards. Again I should roll it. From here, I participated again on the leadership. The legs still made what they should, so why not do something for the cut. In Quedillac, after 389km, there was a secret control. Short bring in stamps and more. Since I was the first inside and outside was again struck me briefly the idea to quickly continue to drive without waiting for anybody. Again and again it came so far in front that no one leadership wanted to do when I went forward out of the wind, or the pace went down but if someone was. Since there was still a long way to go, I dismissed the thought again quickly. Until the control in Loudeac, there was then time to time Breakaway, which were also repeatedly asked. Perhaps 10km before there was a final attempt. Two men were caught up quite a bit. The field woke up and it was neatly made printing. There was a Belgian roundabout just stupidly when I was in front then no one came afterwards. I had such a speed surplus I just drove the field thereof. What to do now, rejoin or try the two escapees

and seek a pursuer. I chose the second option. I drove a few kilometers alone itself to be overtaken by Marko Baloh and then by two other riders. Great, I thought, if you had not have something rather wake up and join us? The four went on the hunt. The pulse jumped neatly into the air. Here what it again, the race feeling. Just in time to the control in Loudeac we had the breakaway group then gathered again. The field was a maybe, two minutes later. Chill the action was plentiful pointless, but she has made endless fun.

In Loudeac then again the same game as always, everyone was taken care of and away. Just not me. Again I went afterwards. But this time I was lucky, after a few kilometers the entire field made a bathroom break. Had I but hastens to lose myself to not take too much time, so I stood there now, and had to wait. Again, the thought came to just keep driving. On me has not been waiting, why should I wait now, I wondered. Still, I waited. Too great was still the respect for the road ahead. So it went in the direction of Carhaix at kilometer 526. Again and again I was forward to meet the wind. It was still good. I was satisfied. But you already noticed signs of wear even with some. The rapid pace did not seem to go over at all without a trace. In Carhaix I then had a bit of luck. I had enough to eat and need to fill only my bottle next to the stamp. Super finally not drive afterwards! Together with all the other, there were now perhaps twenty to thirty riders, it went back on the track. I vornweg. Anyone who knows me knows that I just after the break getting my problems have to come back to the correct passage, so here, too. Really quickly, I can not have been. It went through the village out again, slightly downhill. No traffic lights, priority roads or railway crossings where one might have need to stop. After driving a few minutes I turned around, no longer there! What's going on now? Can you no longer want or no longer it has happened or anything? Heard I had nothing. After a moment's thought, I decided now but for the sole continue. In my eyes it had announced some time. If this is the Wink now? Alone I now put on my track to Brest. A great scenery appeared on the left and right of the road. Then a long descent from the single "Mountain" (after all, is about 300m high). Again and again I turned around, but no one was to be seen. The lead vehicle drove vornweg and with some distance, I followed. Shortly before Brest then was the first time the TV roadside and filmed me. This went on until the control. Numerous motorists and passers-by waved at the roadside and cheered me. It was here a great feeling to drive the first long. No matter how the return is that were definitely the hottest 600km on the bike I had ever experienced.

My plan was that I 13:43 clock einrolle in Brest. In fact, it was already 11:34 clock. About two hours ahead and a 32er average stood to beech. My real goal of 44 hours, I could not miss in practice, too much would have to go wrong. In Brest at the control then the usual. Has great amazement at a driver of any support. It was initially the last time that you had not yet been set at this time to hungry riders. Unfortunately, the aid station was ever far away, cursing, I ran across the huge square. From here the clock ran against me. But what could I do, I needed something to eat. Several chocolate croissants, banana and two cola I took. Under astonished eyes I stowed everything on the bike. With this television, which filmed everything. The people around were thrilled. At the moment then when I was about going on drove up the field. It was the last time I should see it here. Only in Paris at the finish I was to see some of you again.

It continued, again from Brest out, but on a different route as the outward journey. It was not long and I came back on the track of the outward journey. From now on opposing traffic was announced. Around 6,000 drivers should come to meet me during the day. Practically I have seen all, from the Second to the last late into the night. It was interesting with what different people were traveling wheels. From 20 folding bike, about 26er Mtb, trekking bike to bike, a tandem, a German triplet, three-wheeled road bikes and tandems, recumbents any kind, cigars (fully enclosed three-wheeled recumbents) and wheels which are actually more of a stepper on two wheels. Throughout the course of new to old, including clothing. Almost all saluted, waved to me or raised thumbs. It motivated me. Clear was greeted back, as often as possible. But I also have to admit honestly that I was a bit relieved when it got dark and I "had" so why not greet everyone. By the time it was exhausting and then bugged but sometime in 6000 Oncoming. Shortly after the merging of the two track parts before Brest seemed Martin was the first in a group counter. We shouted for something, without that we understood. Anyway, I was glad that he was so good in the time. When he was halfway through keeps creating loose less than 50 hours, I figured after. With a few minutes distance then met me Olaf. Are you the first he called out to me. I yelled back a loud JAAAA. Time passed by very quickly. The lead vehicle vornweg. Every now and then an accompanying motorcycle came by and asked for the right. All well so far. One of them stopped repeatedly for the time chasing pack. I had the whole day always how long my life at the controls took 18-22 minutes ahead regardless. At checkpoints, of course, what was now going on properly. Lots of riders who were only on the outward journey, sitting somewhere, sleeping, eating, or doing just pause. From here it was then adjusted to customers. In most places me someone escorted inside. I did not stand in line, but was able to forward ran to the queue and buy food. I hope that I'm here no one too much "stepped on the feet"! Except for a German driver who is tackled me quite harshly all were very understanding. So if someone felt I treated badly, so I would like to expressly apologize herewith! Also there is now helping to fill the bottle, hold me Bicycle. People always formed a cluster around me asking questions surveyed the wheel, took pictures or filmed me. No matter where I went, you could not believe it really. I gladly would have stayed a bit longer and have all enjoyed a little more. However, the time ran ceaselessly. Again and again I figured out how I was in the time when I'm where and what it could be at the end. Clear the pace of the way there I could no longer look for the already completed kilometers and the long time on the way back. The last 400km were increasingly strenuous. The pinch of wind came still from the northeast and therefore mostly opposed. That was not much, but if you take a piece went towards the south or south-east you could see clearly how these pinch has recently landed yet.

So the day passed fairly quickly. I had great experiences at the controls. Everywhere people were standing at the roadside and were firing at me. Catering stands were built where grapes of cyclists gathered. The villages were adorned with all sorts of bicycles. From huge to small. New and old. Somehow what was done everywhere. Here you can tell already that the French a very different relationship with the bicycle than the Germans. Even if there were only minor roads that we have traveled, I have not even seen the cuts someone honks at me or. It was certainly often the case that the motorist a lot of patience needed by the masses of cyclists. The later the day was the slower seemed oncoming. The faces were empty, and the way to get looked not really around. I saw people who had started an hour after me and came towards me until now, I had been gone over 800km. As is expected then ever after roughly when the

arrive in about again. It is certainly also for me a kind of drudgery, but stalling for over twice as long on the same route? You have in any case, my highest respect!

Fougeres was then the first control again in the dark. From here it was again much quieter, but just what the oncoming driver was concerned. The interest in me increased considerably and I felt rushed as my reputation so slowly out. Here also the only station was where I could even buy a topped baguette. Unfortunately, I was so in thought that I bought only one. So slowly I could no longer see the croissants and banana. The whole thing was so something fatal, when it was sold out the next checkpoint sämtliches food turned out. With great difficulty but enough nevertheless. Some gels were left, a very dry bread from Brest and a Coke. With the fatigue I had no problems even in the second night. Not once I had the feeling to have a nodding off or being inattentive. Drink Like last year, the 1000 Brevet Red Bull did not work here, because there were none to buy the road. Only a few gel had some caffeine, which I had specially lifted me for the second night. Whether these have, however, brought it at the end? I'll never know. As a precaution, I am nevertheless drove most of the night in the middle of the street. On the one hand there was the plaque usually not so rough and should I be but times unfocused so it is a bit further to the ditch, I thought to myself. But probably I had neatly much adrenaline in me what kept me awake and focused. As night only drove the pace car at some distance and no more motorcycle was there, I knew no longer how much lead I had. Again and again I turned around, but lights were nowhere to be seen. Only now and then came time a car passes, but whose lights can quickly realized.

Far ahead of Dreux, the previous test, slowly broke zoom the second morning. It was 8 ° C pretty fresh and I thought here, the only time to put on my windbreaker. However, I thought to myself, you prefer saving time. Long it can not last until the sun warms. So I gritted my teeth and tried to ignore the cold as best they could. Slowly I became aware in what for a time I could reach the velodrome and what it looked like, first. One thinks that beforehand a lot about what and how it could be. But that I could do it alone, no something I thought was impossible. It's not that the others are not able to drive wheel. Again and again I turned around when the road was far cost because the fear was there, you could still catch me anyway. Well, from now on I again saw cyclists. But there were clearly hallucinations. So what I had never experienced before. I turned around I saw two white cyclists. 10 seconds later it was only one Green. Probably, it was in reality only a sign or post. This went on the whole rest of the time to the finish. In the cold I had off and on again to continue to provide water away, then I was able to look at rest. Cyclists were but to not see in any case. That calmed me immensely. In Dreux by an endless march to the stamping point, there still win the penultimate stamp (the last are in the Velodrome) and another two chocolate croissants, even if I really could not seen this. Despite that I got here too early, the control would normally be open until two hours later, it cheered me up again. Quickly I was on the bike again and took the last 64km to the dogs. This went mostly flat (the only flat on the whole route) on back roads through the outskirts of Paris. The lead vehicle always at the front away. The closer we got to the target, the more it gave me free street. I was again fully in the matter, it was warm again, in short it rolled good to go. Again and again now pass Andes roadside and cyclists who looked on in disbelief at the clock and now expected not make the returnees. Now comes a slow anything through your head what could still happen. Hopefully no breakdown, no matter what, hold on. Then finally came the first sign, still 10km to the

finish. A few last roundabouts and traffic lights, everywhere I was waved through. Finally, about five kilometers by a sports park, but which have attracted eternally long.

And then it is there, the Velodrome. The goal in front a bit small and unexciting. But a lot of people, television and photographers. All cheer me. I roll on the huge square in front to a single safety gate and lean my bike there. The first thing I do is take off my shoes, as I was happy for hours on it. There come some people running up to congratulate me and take pictures. Now I just have to Velodrom, pick the last stamp and give the booklet. Calmly it goes inside. It's something to leave at this time, no comparison to the last few days, where thousands were in here. Congratulations that are already there here of the few volunteers at this time. In peace I get my food, sit down and do not say anything. For 42 hours and 26 minutes to finally have time again. Not having to continue, a wonderful feeling. An older, born in England sits down to me. We chat for a while about everything. By the way I eat, Pasta with Chicken. That goes down like oil. When I'm done with food coming in the first subsequent riders. A chat here as chat, photos, shake hands, the whole program. Again and again admiration went like that alone in front of me and the question whether or not I have somewhere hidden a supervisor.

With burning hands, feet and buttocks I wobbled by bicycle then back to the campground. For 12km I needed actually forty-five minutes, so slow I was no longer a long time go. Take a shower, eat something and enjoy a quiet read all incoming messages in Mobile "quick", so my plan. It was in comfortable Deckchair unfortunately nothing. After 56 hours without sleep to my body called for an inevitably. I just made it so in my sleeping bag in which I fell asleep happily.

Paris - Brest - Paris, it was a fantastic event. Excellent organized. There was no negligence, even the wrong input jack used anywhere - instantly you were pointed in the right direction, it just fit everything. The track, super expelled permanently wavy - for me a dream. Thank you very much !!!

As early as the velodrome repeatedly arose the question of how to proceed now, and where you see me next. Yes, there is a goal. That existed before PBP, only it was far more a dream. So slowly but I think that it is feasible for me, when would it be financed somehow:

I would like in 3 - 5 years to participate in the Race Across America (RAAM). 4800km ITT once across the USA from west to east. In preparation until then a few more similar events in Europe with up to 3000km length.

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