

Ask most people what Senegal does best in sport and you will hear one word: football. Sadio Mané, the Lions of Teranga, packed stadiums from Dakar to Europe. Cycling rarely makes the list.

That may be about to change. Last Sunday in Kisumu, Kenya, Senegal's upcoming cyclist Neriah Meunier Sow won gold in the U23 men's road race on the final day of the five-day CAC African Championships. The medal was the first of its kind, in a sport that is rarely spoken about either in public or media back at home.

The championships' own social media account called it a historic moment, the first gold medal Senegal has ever won in the event. [ProCyclingStats](#) lists him fifth in the combined elite race, which South Africa's Callum Ormiston won.

Days earlier, he had already made headlines for another reason. Next season, the 21-year-old will ride for BIKE AID, a German Continental team.

Meunier Sow was born in Dakar, on 24 April 2005, and it is where his love of cycling began. He started riding at twelve. As a junior he raced in France, and more recently in Spain, where he rides for the Surne Bilbao Cycling Team. In June he won the Senegalese national road title. He has also represented Senegal at the UCI Road World Championships in Canada and at the Tour de l'Avenir, the world's top U23 race.

He describes himself as a climber, still working on his sprint.

In a podcast with [Africa Rising Cycling](#), the non-profit that follows African riders, he talked about his family ties to Senegal, his love of its culture and how he got into the sport. He took Senegalese citizenship in 2025. His boyhood hero, he said, was Alberto Contador.

BREAKING TRANSFER NEWS

We are most excited to share that Senegal's Neriah Meunier Sow – probs the best young African rider at the recent [@Montreal_2026](#) World Champs – has signed with our friends at [@bikeaid](#) 🚴🚴🚴

He is a rising star for sure, and the 27th African rider to...
pic.twitter.com/3swFqxXoVs

— Africa Rising Cycling (@CyclingAfrica) [October 20, 2026](#)

Africa Rising Cycling, which has worked with African riders since 2007, has been watching him closely. On its [X account](#), the group described him as a rising young talent and probably the best young African performer at this year's World Championships in Montreal. Writing in [Domestique Cycling](#), Africa Rising's Jeremy Ford said Meunier Sow will become the first Senegalese rider to join a professional team.

For a country with few professionals, that is a heavy label. It also fits: the new kid on the block for Senegalese cycling.

BIKE AID says the sporting side mattered, but it wasn't the only draw for Meunier Sow. "Another important reason for joining is the team's project in Africa," he said in the team's press release. "Being born in Senegal, this is something I feel particularly connected to. I would love to contribute to the development of cycling in Senegal, because I believe there are many talented riders dreaming of becoming professional cyclists who simply don't have the opportunities to pursue those dreams."

The team has been doing this work for years. According to Domestique, BIKE AID has signed 26 African riders since joining the Continental ranks.

Founder Matthias Schnapka told Africa Rising's podcast that the team keeps roster spots for African riders each year and, whenever it can, races events such as the Tour du Rwanda and the Tour du Bénin, to show Europe how beautiful cycling in Africa is.

BIKE AID's sports director, Léo Bouvier, said in the press release that the team had followed the Senegalese rider for over a year. "We firmly believe that Neriah has the potential" to make the step into European professional cycling, he said. Bouvier also pointed to West Africa's cycling culture, from the Tour du Faso in Burkina Faso to races in Senegal, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire. "We want to show that West Africa also has enormous potential," he said. "Neriah can become an important example of t

The obstacles are familiar: little money, few racing opportunities, and the difficulty of getting into international teams and calendars.

There is an African proverb that says if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you

want to go far, go together. Meunier Sow seems to understand it. For now, the plan is to learn, race and grow into the professional peloton. Someday, he hopes to pass what he learns on to the next generation of Senegalese riders.

“I can’t wait to get started,” he says.