

Generation Konychev: father and son together at the Tour de Pologne

Two different roles now and share the same bond to cycling.

One sits in the team car and the other in the saddle. They're different but united by the same passionate desire to ride: Alexander and Dmitri Konychev, respectively a Team Bike Exchange rider and the sports director of Gazprom Rusvelo. Dmitri is a former professional and winner of around forty races and two podiums at the world championships. One of the few to have won at least one stage in the Tour de France, Giro d'Italia and Vuelta a Espana and also winner of the Bielsko-Biała/Zakopane stage on 12 September 1997. His professional career spanned 18 years.

What kind of rider is Alexander? His father says he doesn't know exactly, but he is certainly fast, has a good head on his shoulders and knows how to navigate the peloton smartly. In short, he is versatile and still has to work out what suits him best. In fact, Alexander has been selected for both the European and ITT World Championships in the junior categories, but he is not sure if this is really his speciality.

Dmitri doesn't have much advice for his son now; he has given him some in the past and now it is up to the young Konychev to live the life of a rider, put in the effort and certainly bring out his qualities. Alexander confirms, saying that he was often scolded in the past, now he has grown up, he has taken the advice and knows what he has to do.

The first race Alexander says he remembers is Paris-Roubaix, his father's last professional race in 2006. Ironically, it is also the one he has always dreamed of racing and is on his schedule for this year on 3 October.

Alexander went on stage 3 breakaway, he had been out of competition for a month and that moment was a good test ahead of the rest of the commitments on his calendar this season. His dad's advice would have been to take it easy and save energy. "If you're going fast anyway, they'll push even harder at the front and the result is often a foregone conclusion," he says. "In the morning I asked him if he had recovered and the answer was a photo with his legs up, as if to say: not really!"

The individual time trial will be a crucial part of the Tour de Pologne 2021, and when the father-son duo are asked who goes faster in the time trials, Alexander replies that they don't train together for this speciality and Dmitri admits that he has always approached these trials in "rest day" mode.

"For sure, both uphill and downhill, my son is going faster today," he says, "but I am the fastest at the table." Alexander laughs and concludes, "I wouldn't be so sure!"