

Sports directors analyse the 78th edition of the Tour de Pologne UCI WT

The 2021 edition will kick off on Monday. Here are the tech aspect of the route according to the experts

The 78th edition of Tour de Pologne 2021 will be open to many scenarios, totally out of the classic schemes, as predicted by the sport directors who have evaluated the routes during the last weeks. With just a few days to go before the competition, which will kick off on Monday from Lublin and will end on August 15 in Krakow, here's the voices of the main players and those who will guide them during the race.

Fabio Baldato (UAE-Team Emirates)

"It's going to be a beautiful and varied race," he said, "more open to climber-passers and Ardennes riders, with a good sprint. For sure you have to defend yourself in the time trial which is one of the crucial points of the race, where the final classification will probably be decided. The key stages that will determine the overall classification are the second with the finish placed at the end of a climb and the Bukovina stage, while the time trial will determine the final gaps in the classification. It's almost likely going to be a great last-second challenge, uncertain until the end."

Geert Van Bondt (Deceuninck - Quick-Step)

"I think we have a very good team to go to the Tour of Poland. We have Alvaro Hodeg who has shown his good condition in the last weeks. I see good opportunities for him in stages three and seven. For sure, it's gonna be a sprint stage. João Almeida and Rémi Cavagna are also in shape and very motivated for the race. We can count on Mikkel Honoré, who showed a great performance about a week ago, while Tim Declercq, Ian Garrison, and Stijn Steels will be a very good asset to support our riders. The strength of this Tour of Poland edition is that you have seven stages suitable for every kind of rider."

Frans Maassen (Jumbo-Visma)

"The crucial points of the 2021 edition of the Tour de Pologne - fundamental to conquering the overall victory - are stages two, four and five, and the individual time trial is key, of course. The secret to success is to survive all climbs and be very strong at the ITT."

Rolf Aldag (Bahrain - Victorious)

"The Tour of Poland it's a prestigious race due to its long history and the fact that the Lang family brings a lot of experience into it to create an exciting race. It is world tour level, and a lot of points can be earned for both teams and riders.

Compared to the past, the course has some not as pure climbing stages, which could make it a race about seconds, not minutes, for the GC. Already in the final of stage two, some important seconds can be lost. The 19km individual time trial will not create big gaps, but it will be decisive for the overall. Stage four has two longer climbs in the final, which means that traditional GC climbers need to try to distance the "puncheurs". So stages two, four and six will be key to winning the Tour of Poland, while stages one, three and five can be a showdown for the fast guys.

This year's route is very balanced, but not easy. The long stages will make riders tired and only the best will be able to deliver. It isn't crazily hard, so everything will be about fighting for every second on the road and TT stages. Even the time bonuses can make a difference on winning or losing at the end."

Stefano Zanini (Astana - Premier Tech)

"This year's Tour de Pologne has a beautiful route with good opportunities for all types of riders, this will be great for the show. The two climber's stages will be crucial for the general classification, and also the time trial - so technical and long - could make a difference and put seconds between the GC men. We will field a team that can do well. Sobrero is going to be our man for the time trial, but he and Pronskiy will also try to place in a good position in the general classification without stress. The others will help the captains but will also be free to go in a breakaway and win a stage."

Maximilian Sciandri (Movistar Team)

"I won a Tour de Pologne as a sport director with Dylan Teuns and it's always quite a challenging race. It has a good fit on the calendar, a great route and good organisation, and that always helps. We thought of a team around Ivan Cortina - for the fast finishes with a small group - and Matteo Jorgenson - for the overall classification. I think the Bukovina stage and the time trial will be decisive, especially if the weather is not too good."