

The Tour de Pologne teams were presented at the Teatralny Plac in Lublin
Before the opening ceremony some riders shared their thoughts on the race

We are just hours away from the start of the 78th edition of the Tour de Pologne and the 22 teams attending the Polish race were revealed at today's official presentation in Lublin.

Below are some top contenders' statements on the race kicking off on Monday 9th and finishing on Sunday 15th. It'll be seven exciting stages - including the beloved arrival in Bukovina and the ITT in Katowice - which will test the riders on all terrains.

Michał Kwiatkowski (Ineos Grenadiers)

"It's always a privilege to compete on home roads. Tour de Pologne was one of my first big races as a pro in 2012 and I have always dreamt of winning it in front of Poland's cycling fans. We made it happen in 2018 and it was one of my proudest moments. I would love to do it again with the Grenadiers. It's always a very close race - won or lost by single seconds, so we have to stay focused from the start of day one. Some punchy finishes and a TT in Katowice will surely affect the GC."

Diego Ulissi (UAE Team Emirates)

"The last victories in Sardinia were won on stages that were tailored to my characteristics and the Tour de Pologne this year features routes that suit me," said the Tuscan rider. "I've already managed to get on the podium in the general classification once and I want to confirm that and also try to fight for the overall. We have a competitive team and we'll try to be always there to try to win the stages and get a good placement in the general classification. At the moment my feelings are very good, at the beginning of the year I had a heart problem and the start of the season wasn't easy but luckily I was able to leave it all behind quickly, get back my best feelings and get some victories. Morale is high and I want to do well in the second half of the season. This is an important appointment so we'll definitely face this trip with great motivation. "I've ridden the Tour de Pologne several times, it's a race I really like. Among the best memories there is definitely the stage I won in 2013, when the race started from Italy. Michele Scarponi was also in the team and I always remember those moments with particular emotion."

Tomasz Marczyński (Lotto Soudal)

"The Tour de Pologne will be my first race after a pretty long break, as I rode my last race more than six weeks ago. I am really happy to resume racing in my country, it's going to be my 13th - or 14th - participation in this competition, I guess, and it's always exciting to compete in front of my compatriots. In the last month I trained again to build up my condition, I worked very hard in Sierra Nevada and I am really looking forward to getting back racing. We're going to have a super motivated and fighting team with Oldani, Wellens, and I think it's going to be great. It's also going to be my last Tour de Pologne as a professional cyclist, so it will be for sure a special emotion. That's why I really count on all the Polish fans who've been supporting me all these years. It's really a beautiful race, perfectly organized, and this year the route has a big change compared to last year: also the ITT will be super interesting to race and watch. I really look forward to being there!"

Nicolas Roche (Team DSM)

"This edition of the Tour de Pologne is undoubtedly different from other years: there are new arrivals and the time trial comeback. I have a great memory of the time trial in the city centre. Krakow is beautiful and I discovered a part of the world I didn't know before. It's an intense race. When you have a WT race with such a high-level line-up, a finish in the mountains like Bukovina and an important time trial, you have to spare yourself the first few days to be in top form for the finish."

Andrea Pasqualon (Intermarché-Wanty-Gobert)

"I really like this edition, there are two or three stages that suit me well. It will be my second participation in the Tour de Pologne and I will be happy to be at the start. The route is open to all the riders, the difficulty of the race is not in the hardness of its climbs but in the frequency of its many short uphill. For sprinters like us, there's definitely three stages - the first, the third and the seventh - and I'm happy there will also be some quite difficult finishes like the ones in the second and the fifth stages, which are certainly good for me. We'll be at the start with a well-prepared and organized team and with strong athletes like Quinten Hermans, Belgian cyclo-cross rider, and Lorenzo Rota, who got a good placement in the Basque Country last week.

Silvan Dillier (Alpecin-Fenix)

"After the three hard weeks in France, I feel well recovered and in good shape and I'm looking forward to testing my legs again in the races. I think it's a nice race for us as a team with some sprint opportunities and then some more hilly stages, I believe, towards the end. In general it's a nice stage race, and I'm very happy to be at the start."

Toms Skujiņš (Trek - Segafredo)

"I've ridden the TDP once before, but actually, when coming up through the continental teams, I raced quite a lot in Poland and, every time I go back, or drive through, or race there, and when I did the TDP last time, it really brought back some really nice memories of racing as a young kid and of friends from my city, and I am really looking forward to getting back. It's always a nice race: people are nice and the race isn't really hard. The most difficult aspect of TDP is aggressive racing, as there are many hilly sections and never really flat legs, so it's quite unpredictable and exciting for both the people to watch and the riders to race. It's hard to say how I'm feeling right now because, having had a big block of races, now I am taking a few easy days and the TDP will be the first race I am back after Tokyo, I'll see the family again and hope my legs won't 'disappear' but I don't have too high expectations for it just yet."

Giovanni Aleotti (BORA - hansgrohe)

"I'm looking forward to racing in Poland," he commented. "There are not many real mountain stages but the second from Zamość to Przemyśl, the fourth in Bukovina and the fifth finishing in Bielsko-Biała may be within my reach, with short climbs and uphill finishes. These stages, along with the time trial, will undoubtedly be decisive for the overall classification. The Tour de Pologne is a World Tour race and the level is very high but we have a great team and we will try to get good results."

Matteo Sobrero (Astana - Premier Tech)

"I'm looking forward to racing in Poland. It's my first race after a break from the Giro d'Italia, so I'm looking forward to racing with the team again and, of course, the ITT stage will be one I'm aiming to do well."

Matej Mohorič (Bahrain - Victorious)

I rode the Tour de Pologne many times and I like it. This year they have changed the course slightly, it's a little bit more punchy, there are less long climbs and I'd say it suits me a bit better. Dylan (Teuns) and I will aim at getting good GC placements and I'll also for sure look for any good opportunities to win a stage. I am eager to start racing.

Dylan Teuns (Bahrain - Victorious)

It's my first race since the TDF and I'm very motivated and will definitely do my best to get good results. And who knows, maybe I will be lucky and good enough to relive the emotions of a few years ago.

Tim Wellens (Lotto Soudal)

The course looks really nice, I'd say it's a bit less hard than in the past but hard enough to make it challenging of course. The ITT looks quite interesting with technical up and down.