

Lublin welcomes Olav Kooij's first World Tour victory

The Dutchman is wearing the first ENERGA yellow jersey of the Polish race.

Lublin, 29 July 2022 - It was a long and straightforward stage of 218.8 kilometres from Kielce to Lublin, where a bunch sprint ended with the victory of 20-year-old Jumbo-Visma rider, Olav Kooij, who crossed the finish line after 5h 31' 44" of racing.

The sprinters' teams had to manage a slightly uphill finish, including a 300-metre climb at 4% where the peloton stretched slightly before the finish in the centre of Lublin, the starting city of the 2021 edition. An unexpected crash in the last kilometre messed up the plans a little, but it didn't stop young Olav Kooij from taking his first World Tour victory with a powerful sprint that allowed him to beat sprinters such as Phil Bauhaus (Bahrain Victorious) and Jordi Meeus (BORA - hansgrohe), who finished second and third respectively.

Turning professional in 2021, Kooij, promising Dutch talent, managed to win the ORLEN Nations Cup in 2020, a race that always proves to be a springboard for young riders. He now leads the General Classification by 4", over second-placed Phil Bauhaus and Jonas Abrahamsen (Uno-X Pro Cycling Team), 3rd.

"I am really very happy with this victory. I must say that Poland is a country that brings me luck. In 2020 I won the ORLEN Nations cup and today my first stage in a World Tour race" says an excited Olav. "Also, winning with this group of top sprinters makes it even more incredible. I am over the moon. I have to thank my team for their great work. We knew it was important to get into the first position with 800 metres to go and the plan was executed perfectly. As for me, I focused on the sprint. Tomorrow there will be another chance and we will see what we can do. "

Today the 79th edition of the Tour de Pologne UCI World Tour officially got underway in Kielce. The 163 riders attending, faced 1231 metres of altitude gain, three intermediate sprints, two KOMs and a special sprint - Kazimierz Dolny - with 164.3 km to go.

It all started with a five-rider breakaway consisting of: 147 Kamil Małecki (LTS), 204 Sam Brand (TNN), 211 Jonas Abrahamsen (UXT), 222 Patryk Stosz (POL), 223 Mateusz Grabis (POL) who reached a maximum gap of 5' 40" from the bunch.

The day's breakaway ended with 10 km to go and only the courageous Kamil Małecki (Lotto Soudal) held on until the very end, when he had to raise the white flag.

"It was a long day in the front, but we always co-operated well" said Jonas Abrahamsen. "There was a headwind, but the PZU Mountain Classification's jersey was a more than welcome reward.

It will be difficult to defend because I'm not a climber but I'll do my best. In the next few days I'll try to get into a breakaway again and we'll see."

Patryk Stosz, having collected all the intermediate sprints of the day, now leads the LOTTO most active riders ranking and said: "It was great to wear the jersey on the podium in front of the Polish fans. It was a good front in the breakaway, a good start. I hope it continues like that and I'll definitely do my best to keep the jersey until the end. Now it's important to rest well tonight, because it was a really demanding stage."

Tomorrow it is going to be another fast day from Chełm to Zamość starting at 12.05 from the center of the third most populous city in the Lublin voivodeship.