

80.TourdePologne®

29.07-04.08.2023



Rafal Majka hits the bullseye with a fine victory in the Duszniki Zdrój Biathlon Arena *Matej Mohorič takes second place and retains the ORLEN leader's jersey.*

Rafal Majka (UAE Team Emirates) ended the third stage with a last-gasp sprint to victory in the final kilometre, which included a section of around 500 metres with a gradient of up to 18.8%. Yellow jersey holder Matej Mohorič (Bahrain - Victorious) finished 2nd followed by Michał Kwiatkowski (INEOS Grenadiers), third.

"I always come here for the fans and all the people who support me and my family." said a super excited Rafal Majka winning a Tour de Pologne stage after nine years. "I enjoy cycling here. After a Tour de France where we worked hard and did a great job, I was able to win a stage today.. That's incredible. I'd say I deserved it because yesterday they caught me with 200m to go and I was disappointed. I actually did a pretty good sprint. Now with the GC we're obviously working for Joao, who's also really good in the time trial. I had this opportunity and I grabbed it, now I'm working for Almeida to support him in the GC and Ackermann for the sprints. I'm really happy with how my Tour is going so far, I have a good feeling with my legs and I'm really excited about the team I'm here with."

Today it was *Matej Mohorič* who was disappointed with his performance, about which he commented as follows: *"I think I had the legs to win today but I hesitated too much from the corner 200 metres to go. I was well placed but I was surprised by the last few metres from the last corner to the finish," declared the GC leader jersey. "I thought I might still have a chance in the sprint and I moved to the left, but of course they closed the door, which is normal, so I couldn't really sprint for the win. It's a pity. My team controlled the race today to try to win and get the bonification, because of course the gap I have now on the GC is not enough to secure the jersey. There will be another chance in the fifth stage and we'll see. I think Almeida is the favourite for the GC now. He is a world class timetrialist. Anyway, for me even a place on the podium in Krakow would be a great result, so I'll do my best every day to try and make it happen."*

How the race unfolded

Today the stage started in Wałbrzych and ended in Duszniki Zdrój after a 162,3 km long route where an explosive and tricky finale resulted in a bunch sprint for the leaders' group.

It was a very active start to the race, with around 11 riders taking the lead in the first few kilometres. Caught by the peloton, the action culminated in a two-man breakaway consisting of Jacopo Mosca (LTK) bridging with Andreas Kron (PRT).

Soon after the duo was formed, there were numerous attacks and counter-attacks, the first of which was launched by Rick Pluimers (PRT), who spurred the lead group on. At 20km, Bastien Tronchon (ACT) and Mick Van Dijke (TJV) joined the escape shortly followed by Piotr Brożyna (POL). When the lead group reached the maximum gap of 4'10", Bahrain Victorious imposed a very high pace at the front of the race, which caused a split in the peloton and reduced the gap to the escapees.

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The breakaway ended with around 20 km to go, when the last remaining riders, Krone and Van Dijke, were gradually reeled in by the peloton preparing for a final burst of action. Ineos Grenadiers and UAE Team Emirates took the lead in the closing kilometres of the race and set the pace as the course required the riders to tackle a final challenging uphill section to the line.

The special prize for the 95th anniversary of the Tour de Pologne, situated in Pieszyce at the 38 km marker, went to Mick Van Dyke, while the 1st and 2nd KOMs of the day went to Jacopo Mosca. Damiano Caruso (TBV) took the last KOM of the day.

Tomorrow's stage

The 198 km stage will see the peloton return to flatter terrain, giving the sprinters a chance to really put themselves to the test. The riders will start from the Lower Silesian town of Strzelin and head west to Sobótka before turning back to Opole, the capital of this voivodeship. The Tour de Pologne last visited Opole in 2020, when the second stage started here. The stage features one cat. 3rd cat. PZU KOM in Strzegomiany and three LOTTO Intermediate Sprints in Sobótka, Strzelin and Grodków.