

# 80.TourdePologne®

## 29.07-04.08.2023



### **Marijn van der Berg sprints to first WorldTour victory in Bielsko-Biała**

*Matej Mohorič takes second place and defends the leader's jersey*

A confident Marijn Van den Bergh (EF Education-EasyPost) could not be denied victory in stage 5 of the Tour de Pologne UCI WorldTour. Matej Mohoric (Bahrain - Victorious) was second and Joao Almeida (UAE Team Emirates) third.

*"I feel really good. Yesterday I was second and felt good, even though it was a sprint. Today the stage ended with a finish that suited me best and I was the fastest. It's a good feeling." said today's winner Marijn Van den Berg (EFE). "The riders behind me are really among the best in the peloton and that makes it even better. It's also my first win in a WorldTour race; of course it's always special to win, but this one is even nicer. There will be another sprint on Friday, but it will be for the pure sprinters. I will of course do my best. Racing in Poland always brings me luck. I won here in 2019 and the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix in 2021. It's fantastic to win now at the Tour de Pologne."*

Matej Mohorič (Bahrain Victorious) sprinted to second place and extended his lead in the GC by 12" over Joao Almeida (UAE Team Emirates) and 18" over Michal Kwiatkowski (INEOS Grenadiers). Tomorrow the Slovenian rider will have to defend his leadership on a short but technical ITT course in the city of Katowice.

*"Tomorrow is an ITT and I'll be defending the leader's jersey, so I'll do my best, even though it's not my specialty. In any case. Almeida and Kwiatkowski are definitely the favourites and will be fighting for the GC. I feel good and I have good legs, so we'll see what happens. Even though I won a silver medal at the Junior World Championships in Valkenburg in 2012, it's a discipline that requires a lot of training and I have other goals for the season now. My legs will decide tomorrow."*

During the final lap there was a motorcycle accident involving a live TV motorbike and 4 spectators, two adults and two children, who were immediately taken to the local hospital as a precaution. None of them suffered significant injuries. Three have already left the hospital, while the last one will remain under observation overnight.

The motorbike driver and the cameraman, both from France with many years of experience in World Tour race coverage suffered minor injuries.

### **How the race unfolded**

This morning Pszczyna hosted the start of the 5th stage of the 2023 Tour de Pologne UCI WorldTour for the first time. The stage covered 198.8km before reaching the famous city circuit finish in Bielsko-Biała, where riders had to face three final laps of the 7.4km circuit.

The day began with many attacks and counter-attacks, which were immediately taken back by a strong bunch led by Astana-Qazaqstan and Bahrain Victorious.

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A five-man breakaway - Mick Van Dijke (TJV), Bert Van Lerberghe (SOQ), Thomas De Gendt (LDT), Marcus Hoelgaard (LTK) and Tobias Andresen (DSM) - then formed and maintained a maximum gap of 5 minutes throughout the stage. The last two escapees, Thomas De Gendt (LDT) and Marcus Hoelgaard (LTK), were caught with only 13 km to go as the peloton entered the second of three laps and prepared for a frantic finale.

Bahrain Victorious, UAE Team Emirates and INEOS Grenadiers were able to control the race and set the tempo ahead of a finale that would see their captains as favourites for the sprint. Ilan van Wilder (Soudal Quick - Step) and Gianmarco Garofoli (Astana Qazaqstan Team) crashed in the final 250 metres. None of the riders were forced to retire following the incident and they were given the same time as the winner.

The first LOTTO intermediate sprint went to Ber Van Lerberghe (SOQ) while the second to Tobias Andresen (DSM).

Marcus Hoelgaard (LTK) won the third LOTTO intermediate sprint, as well as the day's three PZU KOMs. He thus secured the mountain classification lead. *"I was in the breakaway and won all the Mountain Sprints of the day. Of course it's not nice to take over the jersey from a team mate. Most importantly, we keep the jersey in the team and we go home with at least one important jersey in our pockets,"* he admits.

### **Tomorrow's stage**

The second last stage is a 16.6 kilometre individual time trial in Katowice. The route in Katowice traditionally winds through the streets of the city centre, featuring the transformation of the Silesian capital, including the Market Square with its characteristic palm trees and the Cultural Zone, where the Katowice Mine was in operation years ago. It has been replaced by the Silesian Museum, the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra and the International Congress Centre. The riders will also have a chance to race through the unique Nikiszowiec district and the Valley of the Three Ponds, which illustrate how green the city is.

The finish line will be at the Katowice Spodek.