



## **Luxembourg's Mathieu Kockelmann triumphs in Štrbské Pleso**

*Frenchman Rondel remains at the top of the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix standings, Mattio strengthening his KOM leadership.*

Mathieu Kockelmann won the 1,347 metre Štrbské Pleso, followed by Ikhan Dostiyev and Fabian Weiss.

Mathieu Kockelmann - stage winner: *"I crashed on the descent and had to change my bike, but I managed to get back into the bunch quickly. I knew I had good legs and the team's plan was to put me in the sprint. I didn't celebrate at the finish because I didn't know I'd won, I thought someone was still in front. It was a great relief for me to win because I have had a difficult year. The weather made the stage difficult, but I feel comfortable in these conditions. I managed to stay calm, remembered what my coach told me this morning and sprinted well."*

Pietro Mattio - KOM leader *'The cold and rain made today's stage very difficult. We rode at an impressive pace for the first hour, everyone wanted to be up front. Luckily, after the second climb I managed to get away with five other riders, including one of my teammates. We tried to ride together to the finish, but it was very difficult because of the headwind. Unfortunately the peloton caught us with 2km to go, but all in all it went well. I still tried to defend the leader's jersey by taking the bonuses on the two climbs. Tomorrow should be an easy day - I hope - and we'll see what happens on Sunday.'*

Rondel Mathys - GC leader: *"It was quite a fast and demanding stage. The breakaway took almost an hour and a half to form, so the first part was very fast. Then came the rain and the technical descent where there were a few crashes. After that the race was controlled until the final climb. Then Matthew attacked with 1.5km to go. I tried to follow him, my team helped me to catch him and we made it to the finish. It was a good race despite my teammates crashing. Tomorrow will be a sprinters' stage, so I don't think we'll check and save our energy for the last day. "*

The ORLEN Nations Grand Prix riders set off from Tvrdošín in continuous rain, arriving on the shores of Štrbské Pleso Lake after over 40 kilometres of climbing.

The desire of all the teams to place a rider in the day's breakaway resulted in a very fast pace and a series of attacks and counter-attacks from the outset. The most combative riders were last year's winner Gal Glivar and KOM leader Pietro Mattio.

Despite numerous attempts, no one managed to gain an advantage on the climb to Kvačany, where the first rider to cross the summit was Pietro Mattio (Italy), followed by Emil Iwersen (Denmark), Fabian Weiss (Switzerland) and Noe Ury (Luxembourg). On the descent there were a number of crashes which split the peloton into several sections. Among those who crashed were Gal Glivar (Slovenia) and Romet Pajur (Estonia), who were forced to abandon the race.

After 70km of racing, Daniel Rubeš (Czech Republic) and Nicolas Milesi (Italy) managed to break away from the peloton, opening up a 20" gap on the quartet of KOM leader Pietro Mattio (Italy), Moritz Kretschy (Germany), Samuel Kovac (Slovakia) and Mateusz Gajdulewicz (Poland), while the group remained at 40". The action didn't last long as the two leaders slowed down and allowed the



chasers to catch up, while the peloton reabsorbed the Slovakian Kovac. The gap between the escapees increased to 55" before the final climb. With 20km to go, Daniel Rubeš made his move. Mattio also took the lead in the KOM of Vysoké Tatry - increasing his lead in the mountains classification - followed by Gajdulewicz, Kretschy and Milesi.

On the last part of the climb, in the pouring rain, the peloton caught up with the attackers one by one. The winner at the finish in Štrbské Pleso was Luxembourg's Mathieu Kockelmann, followed by Kazakh Ikhan Dostiyev and Swiss Fabian Weiss.

The overall standings remain unchanged with Mathys Rondel 14 seconds ahead of compatriot Rolland, with Brennan and Verstryngne 20 seconds behind.

Pietro Mattio continues to lead the KOM with a 13-point lead over Nils Aebersold of Switzerland and a 14-point lead over Michał Pomorski of Poland.

In the team classification, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain are on the same time after three stages.

Tomorrow the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix arrives in Poland to tackle the longest stage of this edition. The riders will set off from Niedzica at 12:05 and arrive in Jasło after 174 km of ups and downs.