



Tanja Žakelj wins in Chies d'Alpago

The Slovenian national champion won the last round of the women's elite category of the Internazionali d'Italia series, while the general classification went to local athlete Giorgia Marchet.

Tanja Žakelj dominates in Alpago. In the last round of the Internazionali d'Italia series in Chies d'Alpago, the Slovenian champion won the women's race at the end of a great comeback. Fourth place went to local rider Giorgia Marchet (KTM - Protek - Elettrosystem), who won the overall classification of the circuit.

Here's what Marchet said just after arriving: *"The Lamosano circuit is one of the toughest, even more so today with the heat. The new track is much nicer, with some artificial technical sections. I think we had a lot of fun, despite the fatigue. I'm not coming from a great period and I'm not in top form, so I have to be satisfied with this fourth place. However, I'm getting my legs back and I can console myself with the overall victory in the International, a goal I've had for a long time and I'm very happy with it now. I have never won a stage in this edition, but I have been consistent. In a few weeks there will be the Italians, where I want to be prepared, and then the finale, another important event and a great emotion".*

Winner Tanja Žakelj commented on the day: *"I ran at my own pace from the start today. It was difficult because of the heat and the very fast pace. Halfway through the race I was in the lead and did what I could. The track is very fast and technical, with some very challenging jumps. It was exciting. Now the next goal is the World Cup, the national championships and the Olympics".*

However, victory was not a foregone conclusion for the experienced Žakelj, who had to chase for a long time before the final solo run.

The race

There were 17 riders in the Open category, which started at 12:00 under a blazing sun. At the end of the second of seven laps, U23 rider Nicole Pesse (Trinx Factory Team) made a decisive breakaway. In hot pursuit was the trio of Tanja Žakelj, Giorgia Marchet and U23 Lucrezia Braidà (Team Sogno Veneto). When Pesse's lead looked insurmountable, the Slovenian champion brought all her experience to bear, catching and overtaking her rivals within a few kilometres to take the win with a 40-second advantage over the Trinx Factory Team rider. Third was Lucrezia Braidà at 1'10" and fourth was Giorgia Marchet at 2'34", already the leader of the general classification, who definitively won the 2024 Internazionali d'Italia Series among the elite women.

U23 and Junior.

In the U23 category, Nicole Pesse put in a great performance, pulling away from her category rivals at the start of the race and keeping her dream of overall victory alive for a long time. Second was Lucrezia Braidà, while Giulia Challancin (BCL Factor Team) completed the podium.

Fourth was Lucia Bramati (Trinx Factory Team), who also took the overall U23 women's title. "Today was really tough," she said, "I suffered a lot from the heat. The first three laps went well, but then I had to slow down because my body was going a bit too far. But in the end I'm very happy because I



managed to keep the jersey. Aside from the heat and fatigue, racing here is always important, both for the performance and for the organisation and all the effort that goes into it. The last time I raced here was in 2018 and I found a very different course. Beautiful, fun and technical. In this edition I grew with each stage, today I wasn't quite as good, but in the end I'm happy. Now I will prepare for the next World Cup races".

In the junior category, European champion Maruša Tereza Šerkezi won ahead of Giada Martinoli (Scott Racing Team) and Antonia Grangl (Austrian National Team). With this result, Martinoli consolidated her lead in the overall classification and won the 2024 Internazionali d'Italia Series in the junior category.

This is what she had to say at the end of this four-stage adventure: "We finished this route in beauty. I suffered a bit in the first few laps, then I had a good fight with Maruša, but in the penultimate lap I couldn't hold her. It was really tough today because of the climbs and the heat. Anyway, I am happy with the way I approached this race, nice races, nice tracks and in the end great satisfaction. I hope to continue like this, my next goal is the Italian championship".