

## The Tour de Pologne is on the verge of a parade of stars

*The top names on the starting list promise to challenge and entertain on Polish roads.*

From 12th to 18th August, the Tour de Pologne UCI WorldTour returns to enliven the Polish and international cycling scene. With just a few weeks to go until the start in Wrocław, the teams are preparing their riders. The provisional start list includes famous names as well as young, up-and-coming riders: the perfect recipe for spectator excitement on all terrains. Climbers, sprinters and men from the classics are ready to battle it out over seven challenging fractions.

The number one will be making a welcome return to the start. **Matej Mohoric** returns to the Tour de Pologne after his triumph in the last edition to defend the title he won on the toughest climbs in 2023. *"Memories of last year's edition are extraordinary,"* said Mohoric. *"This type of stage race suits my characteristics. They are short and eventful, I have room to do well both uphill and in the time trial. I like that the terrain changes all the time, it's a way to test myself and keep the focus on the competition. I'm happy to be back in Poland, I'm sure there will be times when I can be creative, attack and put on a show. The relationship with the public is always very special and it will be nice to see the warmth of the people welcoming you at the start or finish. The fact that people are there to see us race and that they care so much about this event, which enhances the beauty of their country, and is exciting and engaging for me. I want to compete and I will give it my all. I will be the first to start because I like this race and I enjoy it."*

**Pello Bilbao** will be by his captain's side not only as a teammate, but also as a stage hunter, although he won't miss the opportunity to show off his skills on the climbs. Speaking of big climbs, **Valentin Paret Peintre**, who thrilled the fans in Italy in May by conquering high quality climbs, will also be in action. **Romain Bardet** will also be amongst the French riders, who will be riding his last season as a professional and enjoying the support of his fans.

After winning two editions of the Tour de France in 2022 and 2023, and a hard-fought second place this year, **Jonas Vingegaard** will return to the Tour de Pologne. It was on 8th August 2019 that his great career began, a stage win in Poland that literally opened the doors for him. Climber of great mountains and very good cronomen, the Danish rider for Visma - Le Mans Bike will certainly know how to excite the crowds and provide some great cycling moments in his bid to win the general classification of the Tour de Pologne.

As for the stages reserved for the fast bikes, there are high expectations for star rider **Tim Merlier**, as well as **Alberto Dainese** and **Olav Koji**. All three have shown that they are more than capable of putting on a show in the sprints. In addition, Koji has always been particularly active on Polish soil. Last year he won a royal sprint in Opole on stage four.

**Rafał Majka**, who triumphed on stage three with the finish in Duszniki-Zdrój, is back on home soil and will be looking for the most eventful fractions with room for some dramatic action. Majka's career spans 13 years and boasts three stage wins at the Tour de France and two at the Vuelta a España, as well as the general classification of the Tour de Pologne in 2015. He has also had many other successes, including third place at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. He's undoubtedly one of the biggest Polish names in international cycling and he'll certainly be a crowd-pleaser at the forthcoming edition of the race.

Speaking of the enfant du pays, the Tour de Pologne will be proud to see **Cesare Benedetti**, now an honorary Pole, at the start. Indeed, the Red Bull - Bora Hansgrohe rider has decided to call time on his long career after the August race.

As well as the established champions, the Tour de Pologne UCI WorldTour is also a good test for the up-and-coming riders who have been making a name for themselves on the international cycling circuit. **Paul Magnier** is a case in point: at just nineteen years of age, he is already making waves, racing and winning in both the under-23 and professional categories.

The list of riders for the 81st edition of the Tour de Pologne is still being finalised, but some names are already heralding an edition of fireworks, with each athlete having the chance to show the world the best of their talents. An important date then, the one that will start from Wroclaw on 12th August and continue the great tradition of the Polish stage race amidst stunning landscapes and historically demanding sections.