

Olav Koj flies to victory on a perfect day for fast wheels

The Dutch rider returns to success in Poland. Jonas Vingegaard is still the leader of the GC, with a 19-second lead over Diego Ulissi.

The riders of the 81st edition of the Tour de Pologne today set off on stage 4 from Kudowa-Zdrój to Prudnik after bidding farewell to Lower Silesia. In the history of Polish cycling, this town in the Opole region has a special place. It was here that Olympic and world champion Stanislaw Szozda spent most of his life. He won the Peace Race and the Tour de Pologne.

As expected, the stage focused on fast wheels, with **Olav Koj** (Team Visma - Lease a Bike) winning a duel to the line. After several successes in recent years and his triumph at the ORLEN Grand Prix when he was still racing in the U23 category, the Dutchman returned to victory in Poland.

*"I have a lot of good memories of Poland," said **Olav Koj**. "It is nice to be back. We have a good team here with different goals, both for the GC and for the sprint. Racing in this environment, with different targets for everyone, keeps the bar high and really motivates us to perform. I was really happy to win here today and the team did a really good job to get me there."*

Today's stage, the longest of this year's Tour de Pologne, began in picturesque Kudowa-Zdrój. On the first climb an attacking pair formed, consisting of Szymon Sajnok (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team), who leads the most active classification, and Michał Paluta (Polish National Team), who leads the mountains classification. Polish champion Norbert Banaszek and Xabier Mikel Azparren (Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team) tried to counterattack but were unable to catch the leaders, who then fought it out in the intermediate sprints.

*"Today it was quite easy to ride in the breakaway with Michał Paluta," said **Szymon Sajnok**. "We achieved our goals for the day without any problems, then the peloton caught up with us and we took our time to cross the line. My mother, girlfriend, in-laws and uncle were cheering me on at the finish line."*

*"Yesterday I thought that today's stage would be a bit of a rest day," said **Michał Paluta**, who retained the leader's jersey for the mountains classification. "But we decided that the KOM in the 77th kilometre was worth attacking and I wanted to win it myself. Even though there were only two of us in the breakaway, we worked together to get there and I managed to gain five points. Then I rejoined the group and tried to conserve as much energy as possible to get to the finish line. On the way I noticed banners with my name on them, which I had never seen before, so it was very nice. At the start, in Wałbrzych, I even met my kindergarten teacher, which was really exciting".*

The race was also interesting further back: Matej Mohoric (Bahrain Victorious) took a one-second bonus in the intermediate sprint. On a categorised climb, Kacper Gieryk and Norbert Banaszek of the Polish national team broke away from the peloton. The youngest rider, Gieryk, showed the Polish crowd remarkable courage and attacked alone. He won the intermediate sprints in Ząbkowice Śląskie and Otmuchów. The sprint for the special prize in Kamieniec Ząbkowicki was won by Szymon Sajnok,

The peloton controlled the breakaway throughout the race. It caught up with them with a few dozen kilometres to go. After almost 200 kilometres, the sprinters fought for the win and the best of them was Kooij himself. The Dutchman was joined on the podium by Sam Bennett of the Decathlon AG2R La Mondiale team and former world champion Mads Pedersen of the Lidl-Trek team. A good top ten for the first Polish rider to cross the line, Stanislaw Aniokowski (Cofidis), who finished 6th. Jonas Vingegaard (Team Visma | Lease a Bike) retains the GC lead, 19 seconds ahead of Diego Ulissi (UAE Team Emirates). The Italian also leads the sprint classification.

*"Today was a long and relatively quiet day," said **Diego Ulissi**. "We stayed out of danger and that was the goal. The most important thing is that I'm now in second place in the general classification. I will try to consolidate this position and focus on the next few days. I'm looking forward to the penultimate stage on Saturday, it's going to be a tough stage that will certainly decide the general classification, so you have to be ready".*

Tomorrow, the riders face a hilly stage that starts and finishes in Katowice, with much of the stage taking place on the Kraków-Częstochowa plateau.