

Tough Karpacz time trial has crowned Tim Wellens

Jonas Vingegaard now leads the general classification.

The big stars competed today for victory in the individual time trial of the second stage of the 81st Tour de Pologne. The race took place on a 15-kilometre route from Mysłakowice to the Orlinek climb in Karpacz, favouring time trial specialists with climbing skills.

After yesterday's victory - again on the Orlinek climb - the leader of the ORLEN general classification and last rider to start was Thibau Nys of Lidl-Trek. The Belgian champion had already said yesterday that it would be difficult for him to compete with the best. In the first part of the time trial, Poles came to the fore, including national representative Kacper Gieryk and current Polish elite champion Filip Maciejuk (Red Bull - BORA - hansgrohe). Both riders rode a very good race that allowed them to take the hot seat, but later other riders took over.

Romain Bardet (Team dsm-firmenich PostNL) held the reins of the race for a good amount of time, but was outsprinted by over a minute by Tim Wellens, the Belgian champion of UAE Team Emirates, who had already won a stage at the Tour de Pologne in 2016, as well as the climbers' classification.

*"As an ITT national champion I knew that the Tour de Pologne was a special time to show the jersey." said **Tim Wellens** (UAE Team Emirates) after the prize ceremony. "I came to try and win the general classification, but yesterday I was behind the crash and lost a lot of time. It's a shame, but I'm very, very happy to have won today and that's the most important thing. It's also no secret that we have great materials to tackle time trials as a team. We have great skinsuits, bikes and so on. This is important because you feel even more motivated to put in the watts to win. Today is the result of that. Tomorrow will be tough but if I have the strength I hope to support Felix for the GC. Today was tough but he showed he has very strong legs."*

Today's big favourite Jonas Vingegaard finished second, just nine seconds behind the winner. After the race, however, he was pleased to have become the new leader of the ORLEN general classification, 24 seconds ahead of his Team Visma | Lease a Bike team-mate Wilco Kelderman, who crashed in one of the corners.

*"I wanted to win today's stage, but Tim did a very good time trial. I also did well and I am happy with the jersey. Today's stage was crucial for the whole race. I was hoping to do well in the individual time trial and take the leader's jersey in the ORLEN general classification. The most challenging stages from now on will be tomorrow and the sixth. Of course, I also have to be very careful in the sprint stages so as not to lose time or have any crashes," said **Jonas Vingegaard**.*

Diego Ulissi completed the general classification podium and **Felix Grosschartner** took third place in today's stage. The best-placed Pole today was **Piotr Pękala**, who took 25th place. *"I didn't know what to expect today, because I hadn't started in an individual time trial for a long time. But such a long, steady and strong climb has always been my strength. Even though I didn't really know what I was capable of today, I tried to do my best. Maybe I started a little too cautiously, but when the climb started I felt I was in my element. The result is satisfying, especially because the Polish national team mechanics put my bike together last night and I wanted to thank them a lot for that. I didn't think at all that I could be the best of the Poles today, it was a nice surprise,"* he said after the stage.

Tomorrow there will be a new event for the climbers as the riders will face a mountain challenge from Wałbrzych to Duszniki-Zdrój.