## Filippo Fontana shines in the mud of San Zeno di Montagna

*CS Carabinieri Cicli Olympia rider takes victory in the opening round of the Internazionali d'Italia series*

San Zeno di Montagna (VR), 15 March 2025 - **Filippo Fontana** (CS Carabinieri Cicli Olympia) secured a prestigious victory in the opening round of the Internazionali d'Italia series, dominating the muddy **Pineta Sperane** course. The Italian finished ahead of Frenchman **Luca Martin** (Cannondale Factory Racing) and **Juri Zanotti** (Wilier-Vittoria Factory Team), who put in a strong performance.

"*My race didn't start in the best way - I broke the BOA dial on my shoe on the first lap and had some problems going uphill*," said **Fontana** after crossing the line. "*Luckily it didn't affect my riding too much. I love riding in the mud and when I saw the rain this morning I knew it would be a good race for me. Taking the lead early on was crucial to control the lines, set my pace and minimise risks. I felt great throughout the race and had a lot of fun. This is a special win - my first in the Internazionali d'Italia series at this level. I'm really happy!"*

The final race of the day was affected by bad weather, forcing the organisers to shorten the event by two laps. Fontana took control from the start, with Martin and Zanotti battling it out for the remaining podium places. On the final lap the Frenchman managed to pull away from Zanotti and crossed the line over a minute ahead.

**Under 23**

In the under-23 race, Canada's **Cole Punchard** (Cannondale Factory Racing) held off Denmark's **Gustav Heby Pedersen** (Wilier-Vittoria Factory Team) in a thrilling duel, winning by just four seconds. Third on the podium **Elian Paccagnella** (Wilier-Vittoria Factory Team) "*I got a great start, made some nice overtakes and had a lot of fun*," said **Punchard**. "*It was a tough race given the conditions, but I'm happy with fifth place overall and the win in the U23 category. I love racing in Italy - the competition is always high and the tracks are technical and exciting."*

The **Mayor of San Zeno di Montagna, Maurizio Castellani**, emphasised the importance of the event for the local community and highlighted its positive impact: "*We started this collaboration four years ago and immediately recognised its great potential. As participation in the first editions grew, we were inspired to inaugurate a permanent course last year. Since then, the course has become a major destination for cycling enthusiasts and is used throughout the year. For our city, this race is an investment in the future and a fantastic opportunity to promote outdoor sports. The Internazionali d'Italia series marks the beginning of the tourist season every year, allowing many to discover our breathtaking panoramic balcony over Lake Garda*".

**Alberto Mazzurana, Councillor of the Province of Verona**, also expressed his appreciation for the event: "*A big thank you to the organisers for bringing such a high level competition to San Zeno. Verona has a strong connection with cycling and in recent years we have worked hard to support both road and mountain biking. With its hills, mountains and Lake Garda, our region is a top destination for tourism and cycling enthusiasts*".

The second round of the Internazionali d'Italia series will take place on the **Argentario circuit on Saturday 22nd March.**

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