



ORLEN Nations Grand Prix 2025: Frenchman Emmanuel Houcou triumphs in Jasło, Marek Kapela fifth

An exciting sprint finish in Jasło concluded the first stage of the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix. In the final meters, the fastest was Frenchman Emmanuel Houcou, who perfectly finished the work of the entire team and took the win, becoming the first leader of the general classification of ORLEN. In 5th place was the Polish U23 champion, Marek Kapela from KK Tarnovia.

The seventh edition of the **ORLEN Nations Grand Prix** has started! On Wednesday, the riders faced a more than 150-kilometer stage on the route from Łańcut to Jasło. The first part of the section consisted of climbs, but the final was flat, which favored sprinters. However, attacks were not lacking.

After an exchange of blows at the beginning of the stage, two riders broke away from the peloton. The brave ones were Kristian Egholm from Denmark and Italian Filippo Turconi, who won the special prime located on the difficult climb in Błażowa. The Dane stayed in the breakaway the longest, but he was unable to resist the strength of the entire peloton, mainly driven by the French.

The hard work of the entire Tricolour team paid off – in the finale, Emmanuel Houcou showed an excellent sprint and took the victory, becoming the first leader of the general classification of ORLEN. The next places at the finish line in Jasło were taken by Briton Jed Smithson and Luxembourger Mathieu Kockelmann.

“We had an interesting stage from Łańcut to Jasło. There was variable weather, some sun, some rain, crosswind, and all the time up and down along beautiful roads. You had to be very alert, because it’s known that the first stage is always a bit nervous. There were breakaway attempts, but the Dutch and French controlled this race. At the end, the French kept the left side for themselves and beautifully led out their rider” described **Czesław Lang, General Director of the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix**, praising today’s winner, who also spoke very highly of his teammates.

“I am very happy. I wanted to thank the entire team for their work throughout the day. The goal was victory and we did our job well” said **Emmanuel Houcou**. Last year, another Frenchman, Mathys Rondel, triumphed in the general classification of the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix. Now Houcou will try to follow in his footsteps, although he emphasizes that it will not be an easy task. *“I have the jersey now and I want to defend it. It won’t be easy, but I will definitely give my 100%”* he said.

There was reason to celebrate at the finish line for Polish U23 champion Marek Kapela of KK Tarnovia, who claimed an impressive 5th place. *“I’m very satisfied with this result,”* Kapela said. *“This stage really suited me — not too much elevation and a finish that wasn’t overly technical. It came down to positioning and handling the tough moments in the right spot. In the final kilometer, the lead-out trains from strong teams like Denmark, the Netherlands, and France were pushing hard. I had to find the right wheel, hold my line, and stay in the mix — and it worked.”*

Kapela emphasized the significance of his performance: *“This is a very good result. The best U23 riders in the world are here, and securing a place like this isn’t easy in a race of this level.”*

The situation in the ORLEN Nations Grand Prix is still open. Tomorrow is the second stage – the riders will cover 143 kilometers from Jarosław to the Hotel Arłamów, where the stage will finish. Mountains and emotions will not be lacking!