

Beat: Sports

De Marchi (BMC) beat fog to win the 14th stage of the Vuelta

Fabio Aru (Astana) still leads

Madrid, 06.09.2015, 11:09 Time

USPA NEWS - Alessandro de Marchi (BMC) beat fog and his four breakaway companions at the top of Alto Campoo to win his second Vuelta stage in two years in stage 14. The first of three grueling mountain stages in the north of Spain did not have a major impact on the race for the GC.

Even if Dutchman Tom Dumoulin squandered half a minute in the finale while Nairo Quintana (Movistar) showed he was back in form after being hampered by a virus. The start was given at 12:01 to 170 riders. Breakaway attempts took place straightway with Alessandro de Marchi (BMC), the most active attacker with fellow-Italian Salvatore Puccio (Sky) and Spain's Joaquin Rojas (Movistar). The three of them were logically part of the day's break which went at kilometer 59 and also included France's Mikael Cherel (aG2R-La Mondiale) and Carlos Quintero (Colombia).

In the meantime, the fast start had claimed the scalps of Belgium's Thomas de Gendt (Lotto-Soudal) and Samuel Sanchez (BMC), forced out by a foot infection as the race was nearing his home region of Oviedo. At the top of the 3rd category Estaca de Trueba (Km 118), the five, with Cherel in front, were leading the peloton by eight minutes. At the bottom of the 1st category Puerto del Escudo, the gap reached 10 minutes. Cherel was again first at the top, which the Astana-led bunch reached nine minutes later. Quintero picked three seconds of bonification at the sprint at the foot of the last climb.

More than nine minutes ahead into the final ascent, the five were certain to battle it out for the stage win even if local hero Francisco Ventoso (Movistar) and Luis Leon Sanchez (Astana) helped reduce the gap. Astana then took charge of the chase with Aru safely on their heels. Four kilometers from the line, Cherel attacked but De Marchi brought the group back together. The Frenchman was at it again 1.5 km later and the Italian again pulled him back. The stronger of the break, De Marchi again quashed attacks by Rojas and Puccio to go on his own and win in the fog.

The battle for the overall lead also started three kilometers from the finish when red jersey holder Fabio Aru surged, Quintana on his heels. But the Italian had probably moved a little bit too early as he saw Joaquim Rodriguez (Katusha), Rafal Majka (Tinkoff-Saxo), Esteban Chaves (Orica-Greenedge) and Domenico Pozzovivo (aG2R) return. Rodriguez and Quintana then attacked in the finale to collect a few seconds. Tom Dumoulin, who finished 26 seconds behind Quintana with Alejandro Valverde (Movistar) and Daniel Moreno (Katusha) were the only leading favorites in relative trouble in the finale.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-5173/de-marchi-bmc-beat-fog-to-win-the-14th-stage-of-the-vuelta.html>

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V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619