



Friday 28 April 2017

Groenewegen wins opening stage at the 2017 Tour de Yorkshire

History repeated itself at the Tour de Yorkshire with Dylan Groenewegen winning the opening stage for a second year in succession in sunny Scarborough.

Huge crowds turned out in Bridlington to see the start of the third edition and bright conditions meant the county was at its brilliant best as the peloton wound its way through the Yorkshire Wolds and into the North York Moors before a frantic finish along North Bay in Scarborough. In total more than 400,000 people lined the roadside.

Banners, bunting and a whole host of ingenious land art provided a brilliant backdrop as the riders toiled across the tough and testing parcours.

An eight-man breakaway formed after 15km and Etienne Van Empel (Roompot), was the first of those riders to top the Côtes de Garrowby Hill and Goathland to earn himself a spell in the best climber's jersey sponsored by Virgin Trains.

The last escapees were finally caught with 8.3km to go, but before then the peloton had been split to shreds on the fearsome Côte de Robin Hood's Bay. Groenewegen was one of several star sprinters to drop off the pace on that steep ascent but his LottoNL-Jumbo team-mates worked hard to bring him back into contention and the Dutch champion repaid that faith, just as he did in Settle last year.

The 23 year old powered to the line and held off a late challenge from Orica-Scott's Caleb Ewan once again for his first win of the season. The bonus seconds awarded for that victory meant Groenewegen opened up a four-second advantage over Ewan in the General Classification and ensured he will wear the blue leader's jersey sponsored by Welcome to Yorkshire for the second stage. Groenewegen also tops the points classification sponsored by Yorkshire Bank.

Aqua Blue Sport rider Conor Dunne meanwhile, will don the grey jersey sponsored by Dimension Data after fans voted him the day's most active rider on social media.

Aside from the bonus seconds awarded, all the riders that were still in the peloton with 3km to go were awarded the same time after a large crash saw many riders caught up. Magnus Cort Nielson (Orica-Scott) and Marco Haller (Katusha) came off worst and were transferred to Scarborough Hospital with suspected broken collarbones.

More photos can be downloaded here:

<https://yorkshire.box.com/s/s66wydho3fppc0uy7yta4ed85ydpkrt2>

Welcome to Yorkshire Chief Executive Sir Gary Verity cut a proud figure after watching the day's events unfurl.

He said: "Once again Yorkshire has done itself proud. Driving the route today I was overwhelmed by the way people turned out to celebrate our race, and the glorious weather only added to the spectacle.

"Of course, the racing was very dramatic as well and Dylan Groenewegen proved a brave and worthy winner. This result sets things up nicely for what should be another fast finish on Saturday. It will be a real treat to see how things turn out in Harrogate, and I am equally looking forward to seeing how the women fare on the exact same course during the Asda Tour de Yorkshire, which takes place in the morning.

"Tadcaster is bound to be a hive of activity for the start of both races too so we're in for another day to remember."

Brief Results

- 1 Dylan Groenewegen (Ned) Team LottoNL-Jumbo
- 2 Caleb Ewan (Aus) Orica-Scott
- 3 Chris Opie (GBr) Bike Channel Canyon
- 4 Nacer Bouhanni (Fra) Cofidis, Solutions Credits
- 5 Steele Von Hoff (Aus) ONE Pro Cycling
- 6 Kristian Sbaragli (Ita) Dimension Data
- 7 Andre Looij (Ned) Roompot - Nederlandse Loterij
- 8 Adam Blythe (GBr) Aqua Blue Sport
- 9 Baptiste Planckaert (Bel) Katusha-Alpecin
- 10 Enrique Sanz (Spa) Raleigh GAC

General Classification after stage one

- 1 Dylan Groenewegen (Ned) Team LottoNL-Jumbo 4:09:38
- 2 Caleb Ewan (Aus) Orica-Scott +00:04
- 3 Chris Opie (GBr) Bike Channel Canyon +00:06

Full information on the Tour de Yorkshire and Asda Women's Tour de Yorkshire can be found at <http://letour.yorkshire.com>

Notes to editors:

- The Tour de Yorkshire was launched in 2015 to extend the legacy of the 2014 Grand Départ.
- The men's race is a three-day event with a 2.1 UCI Europe Tour classification taking place between 28-30 April.
- The single-day Asda Women's Tour de Yorkshire was awarded 1.2 status in 2016 and this year's race takes place on Saturday 29 April.
- Two million spectators lined the route for the 2016 edition, up from 1.5 million in 2015.
- The 2016 edition was watched by 11.4 million TV viewers in 178 countries.
- The 2016 edition generated £60 million for the Yorkshire economy.
- Our ambition is to grow the men's Tour de Yorkshire to a four-day race and extend the women's race to two days.
- The race is supported by Yorkshire Bank, Asda, Virgin Trains, Dimension Data, Doncaster Sheffield Airport and Flybe, Mug Shot, Aunt Bessie's, JCT600, Tissot, Le Coq Sportif and Mavic.

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