



Sunday 30 April 2017

One million roadside fans watch epic 2017 Tour de Yorkshire finale

A record one million fans turned out to watch the epic finale to the 2017 Tour de Yorkshire which saw Serge Pauwels claim the stage and overall victory.

Not since the 2014 Tour de France Grand Départ has Yorkshire experienced such a huge figure on a single day of racing, and that bumper crowd on Sunday helped ensure the third edition was officially the biggest one yet with overall attendances rising from 2 million to 2.2 million year on year.

Entire communities turned out on the roadside to witness the peloton pass though as they traversed the 194.5km route from Bradford to Fox Valley, Sheffield, and each of the day's eight categorised climbs were also packed with masses of cheering, colourful and enthusiastic fans. The parcours was also lined with incredible, eye-catching land art as pictures of Yorkshire were beamed to a record 180 countries globally.

Spectators were treated to exciting action as well with Pauwels breaking clear on the tough concluding loop and he was joined by Dimension Data team-mate Omar Fraile before the race concluded in Stocksbridge.

The duo then pressed home their advantage with Pauwels leading Fraile over the finish line to seal the biggest victory of his career and a 1-2 for his team who also topped the Doncaster Sheffield Airport and FlyBe Team Classification. Jonathan Hivert (Direct Énergie) rounded out the podium six seconds later.

Those same three riders also claimed the top three positions on the General Classification with Pauwels taking the blue leader's jersey sponsored by Welcome to Yorkshire. Australian Caleb Ewan (Orica-Scott) won the Yorkshire Bank Points Classification, Dutchman Pieter Weening (Roompot-Nederlandse Loterij) sealed the Virgin Trains King of the Mountain prize, and fans on Twitter voted Dexter Gardias (Bike Channel Canyon) the Most Aggressive Rider sponsored by Dimension Data.

More photos can be downloaded here:

<https://yorkshire.box.com/s/qt1532w2huyoqnapmmeii2oypgmpioyo>

After the stage Welcome to Yorkshire Chief Executive Sir Gary Verity was glowing as he reflected on another hugely successful Tour, and reserved special praise for the tremendous Yorkshire public who made 2017 another record-breaking year.

He said: "The last three days have been utterly unforgettable. I realise I keep saying it, but I could not be prouder of this great county we call home. One million roadside fans on a single day is a truly phenomenal figure and there are barely any week-long races in the sport that can command 2.2 million spectators, let alone a three-day event like ours.

"When I drove the route today there were smiling faces everywhere I looked and 'The Yorkshire Terrier' more than lived up to its billing as a stage to remember.

"I'd like to congratulate Serge on a hard-fought victory, and thank all the riders, partners and public who made this the best edition of the Tour de Yorkshire yet."

Daily video highlights can be viewed/embedded here:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/welcometoyorkshire/videos>

Stage and race winner Serge Pauwels said: "I've cycled all around the world and my favourite three crowds are for the Classics in Belgium, those in the Basque Country, and here in Yorkshire.

"The support today was incredible. Over the winter my team wanted me to take part in the Tour de Romandie to warm up for the Tour de France but I said no, I want to do the Tour of Yorkshire.

"I can't believe I've won here. This is my first professional victory and I am a little surprised with myself because usually I prefer longer climbs. Today's stage lent itself to a really explosive rider and there were no moments of respite.

"Today's stage was comparable to Liège-Bastogne-Liège but with perhaps even more people on the roadside."

Brief Stage Result:

- 1 Serge Pauwels (Bel) Dimension Data 4:57:47
- 2 Omar Fraile (Spa) Dimension Data
- 3 Jonathan Hivert (Fra) Direct Energie 0:00:06
- 4 Brent Bookwalter (USA) BMC Racing Team
- 5 Tao Geoghegan Hart (GBr) Team Sky 0:00:08
- 6 Maurits Lammertink (Ned) Katusha-Alpecin
- 7 Matthew Holmes (GBr) Madison Genesis
- 8 Mark Christian (GBr) Aqua Blue Sport

- 9 Lennard Hofstede (Ned) Team Sunweb
- 10 Joey Roskopf (USA) BMC Racing Team 0:00:23

Final Standings

- 1 Serge Pauwels (Bel) Dimension Data 11:53:04
- 2 Omar Fraile (Spa) Dimension Data 0:00:06
- 3 Jonathan Hivert (Fra) Direct Energie 0:00:07
- 4 Brent Bookwalter (USA) BMC Racing Team 0:00:18
- 5 Matthew Holmes (GBr) Madison Genesis 0:00:20
- 6 Maurits Lammertink (Ned) Katusha-Alpecin
- 7 Mark Christian (GBr) Aqua Blue Sport
- 8 Tao Geoghegan Hart (GBr) Team Sky
- 9 Lennard Hofstede (Ned) Team Sunweb
- 10 Joey Roskopf (USA) BMC Racing Team 0:00:35

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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