



Friday 29 April 2017

Massive crowds see Bouhanni sprint to victory on Stage Two

Crowds on a par with those of the 2014 Tour de France Grand Départ turned out to watch a pulsating sprint finish in Harrogate which saw Nacer Bouhanni emerge triumphant on stage two.

The peloton was treated to an equally warm welcome at the start line in Tadcaster - just as the world's best female riders had been at the Asda Women's Tour de Yorkshire earlier in the day - with 405 schoolchildren lining Tadcaster Bridge to signify the number of days they had been without it following the tragic floods of 2015. The Yorkshire Regiment Drums Platoon were also on hand to provide a rousing reception before the riders went on their way.

Once again the weather proved favourable and all the towns and villages along the 122.5km route did the county proud by celebrating the race in a whole host of imaginative ways as it passed by.

That must have spurred Yorkshiremen Connor Swift (Madison Genesis), James Gullen (JLT Condor) and Harry Tanfield (Bike Channel Canyon) on as they all featured in a four-man breakaway that enlivened proceedings early in the stage.

Tanfield's efforts in the day's two intermediate sprints saw fans on Twitter vote him into Dimension Data's Most Active Rider jersey, but all four escapees were caught before a fast finish ensued in Harrogate.

As the sprint specialists raced towards the line Bouhanni latched onto Hivert's wheel, but as his compatriot faded Bounhanni pressed on to seal his fourth win of the season.

Ewan's disappointment at a successive second-placed finish was tempered by the fact that he moved into the Welcome to Yorkshire blue leader's jersey and opened up a two-second lead over Bouhanni and Friday's victor Dylan Groenewegen (LottNL-Jumbo).

Ewan's consistent form also means he tops the Yorkshire Bank Points Classification while Etienne Van Empel (Roompot Nederlandse Loterij) defended his place at the top of the Virgin

Trains King of the Mountain Classification. Team Dimension Data lead the Team Classification sponsored by Doncaster Sheffield Airport and FlyBe.

More photos can be downloaded here:

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

After the stage Welcome to Yorkshire Chief Executive Sir Gary Verity said: “When I arrived at the finish line today it took me right back to the Tour de France three years ago. The crowds in Harrogate were absolutely tremendous and the atmosphere was electric.

“Of course, every other place along the route played an equally pivotal role in making today’s stage another huge success and it makes me so proud to know these scenes are being beamed right around the world.

“It’s on to Bradford now and I’ve been looking forward Sunday’s stage ever since we revealed the route last December. We’ve nicknamed it ‘The Yorkshire Terrier’ as it’s an absolute brute with over 3,500 metres of climbing and four categorised ascents in the last 22km.

“I can’t wait to see how that turns out and I’m certain it will be another unforgettable experience.”

Daily video highlights can be viewed/embedded here:

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

Stage two winner Nacer Bouhanni said: “The conclusion of today’s stage was hard and steep. Here in Yorkshire it seems like all the roads are hilly!

“Yesterday I watched the finish of the 2014 Tour de France stage here when Marcel Kittel won and that allowed me to better understand today’s sprint. I produced my effort with 400m to go and when Jonathan Hivert kicked I knew I had to react immediately.

“This is my fourth win of the season and it gives me confidence because the Tour de Yorkshire is my first race after a brief break. There were so many people on the road today it felt like the Tour de France.”

Brief Result:

- 1 Nacer Bouhanni (FRA) Cofidis, Solutions Credits 2:45:51
- 2 Caleb Ewan (AUS) Orica-Scott
- 3 Jonathan Hivert (FRA) Direct Energie
- 4 Dylan Groenewegen (NED) Team LottoNI-Jumbo
- 5 Chris Lawless (GBR) Great Britain
- 6 Kristian Sbaragli (ITA) Dimension Data
- 7 Søren Kragh Andersen (DEN) Team Sunweb
- 8 Tony Hurel (FRA) Direct Energie
- 9 Matthew Homes (GBR) Madison Genesis
- 10 Adam Blythe (GBR) Aqua Blue Sport

General Classification after stage two

- 1 Caleb Ewan (AUS) Orica-Scott 6:55:17
- 2 Nacer Bouhanni (FRA) Cofidis, Solutions Credits +0:00:02
- 3 Dylan Groenewegen (NED) Team LottoNL-Jumbo +0:00:02

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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