



PRESSEMITTEILUNG

Van Wilder celebrates his first victory by winning the 1st stage of the Deutschland Tour

With the first victory of his career, Ilan Van Wilder (Soudal Quick-Step) took over the red jersey at the Deutschland Tour. The Belgian won the 1st stage over 179 kilometres to Merzig in a sprint of a group of three ahead of Felix Großschartner (UAE Team Emirates) and Pavel Sivakov (Ineos Grenadiers).

Van Wilder now leads the overall ranking with nine seconds ahead of Großschartner and ten ahead of Sivakov. The 23-year-old thus also gets the jersey of the best young rider, which will be worn by Kevin Vermaerke (dsm - firmenich) as a substitute. The US-American is eligible for the jersey as the third best young professional because Ethan Vernon (Soudal Quick-Step), who is still ahead of him in the ranking, was able to defend the green jersey of the best in points. The blue jersey for the leader in the mountain classification, which was awarded for the first time, was won by Harm Vanhoucke (Lotto Dstny).

"I am very proud", Van Wilder said at the post-race press conference. "When we were in the group, we just went full throttle. No one hesitated or avoided leads. It wasn't until 500 metres ahead the finish line that the games started. I knew I could do a good sprint, I had a lot of confidence."

After the start in Kassel, a breakaway group around the five German continental riders Vincent John (Rad-Net Osswald), Albert Gathemann (P&S Benotti), Jasper Levi Pahlke, Oliver Mattheis (both Bike Aid) and Silas Köch (Saris Rouvy Sauerland) as well as the Belgian Vanhoucke determined most of the day. The group worked out a lead of more than five and a half minutes.

In the hilly middle part of the stage, the group initially fell apart, 38 kilometres before the finish Vanhoucke as the last survivor got caught. At this point, the Belgian had already secured the mountain classification. After that, the pace flattened out until the two final laps in Merzig. One of the favorites, Mads Pedersen (Lidl-Trek), had already been left behind.

At the first crossing of the Ellerberg the peloton was strongly reduced, but a decision was not made yet. On the second lap, Sivakov attacked. First Van Wilder caught up with him, then also Großschartner. Behind him, another trio formed around Vermaerke, last year's GC second Pello Bilbao (Bahrain Victorious) and Dylan Teuns (Israel - PremierTech), who were able to stay ahead of the peloton until the finish but did not reach the top.

On the 2nd stage the peloton rides from Kassel to Winterberg over 201.3 kilometres – it's the longest stage of this year's Deutschland Tour. It also leads through hilly terrain over long stretches. But the last 20 kilometers will be decisive. The winner is crowned in a mountain finish in Winterberg.