



PRESS RELEASE

Lidl-Trek's dominance unbroken: Milan still unbeatable in the sprint

Temporarily left behind, but the fastest in the end: Jonathan Milan (Lidl-Trek) won the 3rd stage of the Lidl Deutschland Tour 2024 in a bunch sprint and thus celebrated his third stage victory in the course of the tour. Milan was faster than Max Kanter (Astana Qazaqstan Team) and Jordi Meeus (Red Bull - BORA - hansgrohe) on the 211.1-kilometre stage between Schwäbisch Gmünd and Villingen-Schwenningen, the longest and hottest section of the tour.

Milan's team-mate Mads Pedersen continues to lead the overall standings. His lead over Tobias Halland Johannessen (Uno-X Mobility) is still twelve seconds. New third is Danny van Poppel (Red Bull - BORA - hansgrohe), who passed Ethan Hayter (Ineos Grenadiers) by winning the bonus sprint at the first crossing of the finish line in Villingen and is now 19 seconds behind the leader.

In the end, **Milan** had the legs for his ninth win of the season - the 14th of his career - although he had lost contact with the peloton in the meantime. *"I was dropped twice on the steep climbs at the start, but was able to fight my way back. After that, we controlled the race perfectly, even if it wasn't so easy to catch up with the breakaway in the rather strong headwind,"* said the 23-year-old, who once again let the man in blue lead the sprint.

"Johnny is the best sprinter in the world right now. Even if he is only mediocre in the final, he will still win. That's why there's no doubt in my mind that I'll take the sprint. I would be stupid if I tried and then finished third or fourth," said **Pedersen**, who can also imagine the same scenario for the final stage tomorrow in Saarbrücken. *"But no matter what happens tomorrow: We can already say that it has been a very successful Deutschland Tour for us."*

While Pedersen defended the leader's jersey, Johannessen remains the man in white and Milan extended his lead in the points classification, Jørgen Nordhagen (Visma | Lease a Bike) is the new man in the climber's jersey. Anton Lennemann (Bike Aid) won the Instagram vote for the community jersey.

In the mountains of the Swabian Alb, it took a few kilometers before a leading group had formed. Nordhagen was joined by Taco van der Hoorn (Intermarché - Wanty), Marius Mayrhofer (dsm-firmenich PostNL), Mattéo Vercher (TotalEnergies) and Dawit Yemane (Bike Aid). At the first mountain classification in Ochsenwang, where thousands of spectators on the roadside created a Tour de France feeling, the brief five-minute lead was halved again.

The 19-year-old Nordhagen then proved to be the strongest of the runaways. The Norwegian cleared all of the mountain classifications and even rode away from his rivals at times. While Yemane was no longer able to follow the rest of the leading group, Santiago Buitrago (Bahrain Victorious) started a solo chase from the peloton.



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With 37 kilometers to go, Buitrago had caught up with the leading quartet, with the peloton still a minute and a half behind at this point. While the rest of the breakaway was caught with 16 kilometers to go, Buitrago and Vercher delayed their catch-up until the ten-kilometer mark.

The 4th stage of the Lidl Deutschland Tour 2024 starts tomorrow in Annweiler am Trifels in Rhineland-Palatinate. It ends 182.7 kilometers later in Saarbrücken. With the ascent to the Kalmit, the longest climb of the tour awaits on the final day. But it is not the only difficulty of the day. It remains hilly, even on the final lap in Saarbrücken, which has to be cycled twice, there is yet another tough climb. The decision on who will win the Deutschland Tour is therefore postponed until the last moment.