

Stage 1 report

Jasper The Master scores from the start

Popularized by the Tour de France Netflix series as “Jasper Disaster”, Jasper Philipsen confirmed right from stage 1 in the 58th Presidential Cycling Tour of Türkiye that he’s now “Jasper The Master” after he claimed four stages and the green jersey at the Tour de France last July. The superfast Belgian from Alpecin-Deceuninck outsprinted Astana’s Gleb Syritsa and his compatriot Timothy Dupont from Tarteletto-Isorex in Antalya.

“It’s always hard to win”, Philipsen reacted. “Therefore, I’m happy to be able to win already on stage 1. This is my third consecutive time coming to the Presidential Cycling Tour of Türkiye but I have more second places than wins from the two previous years. I came here to try and change that. We have a mix of experience in the team with Ramon Sinkeldam but also young riders with whom we’re preparing the future. This is actually a very good race for planning next year as well. It’s also the perfect race to do some good sprints.”

Six riders formed the breakaway of the day: Robinson Oyola (Team Medellin-EPM), Dogukan Arikan and Serdar Anil Depe (Spor Toto), Mateusz Kostanski (Voster ATS), Alex Vandenbulcke (Tarteletto-Isorex), Tobias Nolde (P&S Benotti) and Bram Dissel (Dutch national team). It gave the opportunity to the latter to become the first leader of the Treasures of Türkiye classification while Nolde took the first King of the Mountains jersey. But it came down to a bunch sprint as the peloton was approaching the final ten kilometres.

“It was quite a nervous sprint today but as it always is”, Philipsen explained. “We did quite well with a good timing and positioning. We stayed out of trouble before we took the lead. “I don’t know all my adversaries this week because there are some continental teams who might have sprinters that I never raced against in the past but I already knew Gleb Syritsa who finished second today. He’s obviously in good shape. I wasn’t surprised that he was the designated sprinter for Astana today. This is Mark Cavendish’s come-back race after his injury at the Tour de France. He can win some sprints this week also but maybe he’s just getting some shape first. He had a surgery and a tough time after the Tour.”

Philipsen is on track to become the winningmost pro cyclist of the 2023 season. “I’ve been laughing and texting with [former team-mate and friend] Tadej Pogacar with regards to the number of victories we’ll both end up with this year”, the Belgian added. “He’s got 17 wins now and I’m at 16 today but he won a Monument of cycling yesterday and that’s worth much more than the numbers. I don’t have any super big race on my schedule for this year anymore so I just try to win as many races as I can. There is a maximum of six opportunities for sprint finishes but it’s never easy to keep the peloton together.”

“Today was one of the easiest stages so I could enjoy the landscapes and riding under the sun. The scenery next to the coast was very nice. I know we’ll see other beautiful places this week. There are two mountainous stages so it will be hard as well. I asked the team to bring me here again. I like coming to Türkiye.”