

Jasper Philipsen finally takes his win at Marmaris

After three near misses, Jasper Philipsen (Alpecin-Fenix) managed to beat André Greipel (Israel Start-Up Nation), Kristoffer Halvorsen (UnoX) and arch-favourite Mark Cavendish (Deceuninck-Quick Step) in a bunch gallop under the bright sunshine in Marmaris.

“For sure I was very disappointed with the three second places”, Philipsen reacted.

“Everything just had to fall on a good place if I didn’t make any mistake in the sprint. I’m super happy to finally win here in Turkey. We had to change our tactic a little bit. As we lost three guys, I didn’t have a full lead out. I had to count a little bit on other teams. In the last 5km, my chain fell off the ring. After that I had to push a lot more watts to keep the speed going. I was almost sure I wasn’t able to win the sprint but I could follow the good wheels and I managed to sprint. I was happy that Greipel opened up. Otherwise it would have been impossible for me to win. To win a stage here after the Scheldeprijs is also very good. Let’s hope we make it an even better week the next two days. Yesterday we all knew that our new team-mate Jay Vine has capacities for climbing but the actual racing was something different. He showed his real potential. Maybe we can help him get some seconds on the road to win the TUR overall.”

Among many skirmishes in the first part of the race, one breakaway included Javier Romo (Astana) and Pierre Rolland (B&B Hotels) who were a threat to Diaz’s turquoise jersey. Vitaliy Buts (Salcano Sakarya) took the 3rd category KOM at km 51.7 in front of GC runner-up Jay Vine (Alpecin-Fenix) and Sebastian Schönberger (B&B Hotels). “Today again I managed to take three KOM points”, Buts commented. “I’m very happy to have won the first KOM, also with the way I won it, quite far ahead of the others. I saw that Jay Vine tried to go for it and he came second. I hope to do the same in the next two days and retain the red jersey till the end.”

After the intermediate sprint that saw the victory of Yauheni Sobal (Minsk) at km 59.8, a breakaway could finally take shape. It included five riders: Samuele Zoccarato (Bardiani CSF-Faizanè), Tom Paquot (Bingoal Pauwels Sauce WB), Samuele Rivi (EOLO-Kometa), Ivar Slik (Abloc) and Schönberger. Slik was in good position to extend his lead in the Beauties of Turkey competition with 31.1km to go.

“Today I had the good legs I was hoping for and it enabled me to get the five points I wanted”, the Dutchman said. “I’m happy to still have the white jersey and I’m confident to keep it till the end with the advantage I have now. The first 55km were very fast and hard with some climbs. After the intermediate sprint, we managed to break away with five strong riders but the gap didn’t go bigger than one and half minute so we had to push very hard for a small advantage. Luckily it worked out for the Beauties of Turkey prime.”

It was all together again 12km before the end. Many attacks took place but it came down to a bunch gallop. Neither Mark Cavendish nor Greipel who had won in Marmaris in the past managed to do it again as Philipsen proved to be the fastest on the day.

“I wouldn’t say I’m frustrated because there are worse things in life than a second place in a bike race”, Greipel noted. “The team trust me and has confidence in my sprint. It’s just unfortunate that I couldn’t pay them back with a win today. With the work we have done so far here and a dominant lead out in the past few days, I think we deserve a win and we’re gonna keep trying.”

Halvorsen commented on his third place: “I think it could have worked again but I was a little too late. I stayed focused the whole stage and my team did a good job. I’m disappointed that I couldn’t take the win.”

Race leader Diaz concluded: “At the end, it’s been a very difficult day. It’s been hard to control the breakaway attempts and make sure there wasn’t anyone dangerous up there. Eventually a group went away and we managed to control. In the final climb, there were quite a lot of attacks. But at the end, we got what we wanted. It was a bunch sprint and I crossed the line with no problem. For the remaining two days, we’ll look at following the same plan as today.”