

Beat: Sports

Dumoulin won the 9th stage and the red jersey of the Vuelta of Spain

The race rests Tuesday

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USPA NEWS - Tom Dumoulin (Giant Alpecin) claimed back the Vuelta of Spain's red jersey with a brilliant display of strength in the Puig Llorenca climb crowning the 9th stage of the Vuelta, in which he outclassed Chris Froome (Sky) and Joaquim Rodriguez (Katusha).

The Dutchman, who held the Vuelta lead for one day in Vejer de la Frontera, made it back to the top thanks to three blistering attacks in the last ascent, dropping most of the favourites, including red-jersey holder Esteban Chaves (Orica-Greenedge), who lost nearly a minute in the finale to the rider he was leading by ten seconds at the start in Torreveja.

The start was given at 13:49 to 183 riders. Two of this edition stage winners did not start: Belgium's Jasper Stuyven (Trek Factory), with a wrist fracture, and Peter Sagan (Tinkoff-Saxo), bruised after his crash in stage 8. The day's break took shape in the early kilometers, involving Nikolas Maes, Pieter Serry and Maxime Bouet (Etixx-Quick Step), Geraint Thomas (Sky), Lorenzo Manzin (FDJ), Mattia Cattaneo (Lampre-Merida), Yohan Bagot (Cofidis), Maarten Tjallingii (LottoNL-Jumbo), Omar Fraile (Caja Rural), Tony Hurel (Europcar), Danny Van Poppel (Trek), Pavel Brutt (Tinkoff-Saxo) and Songezo Jim (MTN-Qhubeka). Those 13 riders were joined by Alexis Gougeard (AG2R) at kilometre 42.

At kilometer 34, a massive pile-up at the front of the bunch sent some of this Vuelta's leading names to the floor. Alejandro Valverde (Movistar), Fabio Aru, Mikel Landa (Astana), Samuel Sánchez (BMC), Domenico Pozzovivo (AG2R-La Mondiale) and John Degenkolb (Giant-Alpecin) were among the riders involved but none was seriously affected. Thomas Degand (IAM) called it quits after 55 km.

The lead of the 14 reached a maximum of 5:40 after 40 km before Joaquim Rodriguez's Katusha team-mates decided to maintain it around four minutes. 50 km from the finish line, Movistar took over at the front of the bunch and the gap instantly diminished. It was down to 2:30 in the first ascent of Puig Llorenca, on which the leading group dissolved, leaving only KOM Fraile, Cattaneo, Bagot and Serry in the lead. Fraile was first at the top and strengthened his polka-dot jersey. In the descent, the four were caught back by Thomas and Bouet and further down by Jim, Brutt and Tjallingii, who won the day's sprint in Bahia de Javea.

At the 15-km mark, Joaquim Rodriguez's team-mates had brought the pack back within a minute of the nine escapees. With 10 km left, Bouet and Brutt parted company with their companions and were later joined by Thomas. Serry, Bagot and Cattaneo followed some 15 seconds back. The six regrouped but were reined in by the pack into the final climb. The big fight started, Valverde and Quintana trying to surge before Dumoulin launched his first attack, aided by Jose Goncalves (Caja Rural). Chaves first managed to pull him back. But the Dutchman attacked again with 2 km left, this time leaving Chaves hapless. Chris Froome (Sky) raised the tempo, Rodriguez on his heels, and jumped in characteristic fashion looking set for stage victory.

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