



Pressedienst

Jul. 01, 2017

Around 500,000 Cycling fans celebrated the start of the Tour de France in Düsseldorf

Spectacular start of the French Tour with the individual time trials/Tomorrow, the cyclists will pass through Düsseldorf twice during the 2nd stage

The Tour de France 2017 started on Saturday, 1 July, in Düsseldorf with spectacular individual time trials in front of an enthusiastic audience of cycling fans: despite the rainy weather, around 500,000 fans came to the state capital to see the world's 198 best cyclists live in their first trial of strength and to enjoy the supporting programme. The British cyclist Geraint Thomas was able to don the yellow jersey of the overall leader of the Tour, which he will wear on tomorrow's 2nd stage through Germany to Liège. The German time trials champion Tony Martin was among the favourites and reached the finish line in fourth place. The individual time trials over 14 kilometres through the state capital marked the start of the, in total, 3,540-kilometre Tour de France 2017.

Düsseldorf's Mayor Thomas Geisel: "Düsseldorf and the many guests from Germany and abroad defy the rain and celebrate the greatest sporting event our city has ever experienced."

Those who wanted to experience the cycling pros live and close up had the best chances at today's individual time trials. But also the TV viewers got to see the entire race from great perspectives captured by numerous cameras - among other things from the helicopter.

The sports enthusiasts at Düsseldorf's trade fair were able to experience the start, where the cyclists set off on the round circuit through the city centre at intervals of one minute. For this, the route first led along Rheinufer towards the cultural centre Ehrenhof and over Oberkasseler Bridge. The race track then went over Rheinknie Bridge back towards the city centre, with the Rhine



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Tower and the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia serving as a backdrop. Past the Media Harbour with the famous Gehry buildings and on to Düsseldorf's most famous strip: Königsallee. At the end of the "Kö", the cyclists passed the Triton fountain and turned into Heinrich-Heine-Allee, skirted the Deutsche Oper (opera house) and returned to Rheinufer. The following finishing straight of 3.3 kilometres along the Rhine took the cyclists back to the fair.

The following prominent guests were present for the 1st stage:

Prince Albert II. of Monaco, Anne Hidalgo (Mayor of Paris), Laura Flessel-Colovic (Sports Minister of France), André Kuper (President of the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia), Heiko Maas (Federal Minister), Anne-Marie Descôtes (French Ambassador to Germany), Dr. Nikolaus Meyer-Landrut (German Ambassador to France), Maria Lorena Gutierrez Botero (Ambassador of Colombia), Renata Kaznowska (Vice-President of Warsaw), Isabelle Berro-Amadei (Ambassador of the Principality of Monaco), Jan van Zanen (Mayor of Utrecht), Hans Wilhelm Reiners (Lord Mayor of Mönchengladbach), Barbara Ludwig (Mayor of Chemnitz), Reiner Breuer (Mayor of Neuss), Angelika Mielke-Westerlage (Mayor of Meerbusch), Christoph Schultz (Mayor of Erkrath), Rose Williams (Mayor of Reading), Rudolf Scharping (President of the Bund Deutscher Radfahrer (German cycling federation)), cycling legend Eddy Merckx and Albrecht Woeste (Honorary Citizen of the City of Düsseldorf).

Within the framework of a town twinning reception on 1 July, together with Prince Albert II. of Monaco, Laura Flessel-Colovic, Sports Minister of France, and Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, the heads of the twin towns signed the City's Golden Book on special pages for the Grand Départ.

Sunday - start of the 2nd stage in Düsseldorf

Tomorrow, on Sunday, 2 July, Düsseldorf is completely under the banner of the 2nd stage of the Tour de France, which, with a loop through the Neander Valley in the district of Mettmann, leads through the state capital twice before the cyclists pedal off through the neighbouring towns in the direction of Liège/Belgium. ARD and Eurosport are live on the scene for their TV viewers. The race can also be followed online in the live stream on Sportschau.de. The



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start of the, in total, 203.5-kilometre race is at 12.03 am, but visitors can already see the publicity caravan from 10 am. From Burgplatz in Düsseldorf, the caravan drives through the town along the race track and thus marks the kick-off of the 2nd stage of the Grand Départ in Düsseldorf. One highlight will be the first mountains classification of the Tour in Fahneburgstraße at the horse racecourse in Grafenberg.

Big stage programme on the meadows at the state government

At the "Festival du Tour" on the meadows at the state government, there is also a big programme on Sunday, 2 July, with information on all aspects of cycling, rousing stage acts and plenty of hands-on activities! And the focus is always on the Tour - through transmission on an LED wall, the fans are always at the height of the action during both stages in and around Düsseldorf. Our tip: the neutralised route after the start of the second stage leads right through the festival grounds at around 12 am. There you can get right up close to the professionals on wheels. From 3.10 pm, the Düsseldorf singer and songwriter Paul Falk will appear and present his new album. In addition, many Tour parties will be celebrated in the districts along the route - among other things at the mountains classification in Fahneburgstraße.

Grand final for the children of the Petit Départ

Prince Albert of Monaco and Mayor Thomas Geisel started the race for the finalists with a symbolic "starting shot" - setting off the children's cycling competition Petit Départ at the Düsseldorf trade fair: the in total 76 winners of the six preliminary competitions in the city of Düsseldorf were able to race on the shortened route of the 1st stage of the Tour de France ahead of the pros on 1 July within the framework of the Grand Départ. The highlight was the subsequent group photo on the original winner's podium of the Tour de France. The Mayor Klaudia Zepuntke and Sven Teutenberg, Event Director Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017, awarded the children. As a gift, there was a small cuddly toy for all the participants, based on the cuddly lion that each Tour stage winner receives at the official victory ceremony.

"The Petit Départ children were able to ride in the tracks of the world's



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greatest cyclists and even mount the original podium of the Tour de France for the victory ceremony - certainly a unique experience for everyone there. An excellent final - the Petit Départ was a great promotion for cycling as a sport", explained the Mayor Thomas Geisel. With the competition, in the run-up to the Grand Départ of the Tour de France, children aged between 8 and 12 (born in the years 2005 to 2008) were to be introduced to cycling as a sport. The focus was to be on sport as fun.

Kraftwerk concert as musical highlight

The musical highlight on 1 July is the "Tour de France 3D" concert of the Group Kraftwerk at Ehrenhof. As a supporting act, there is a performance by the group AIR at 7.30 pm. The concert is sold out.

All the media information from the state capital of Düsseldorf on the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017 can be found on our media portal at www.duesseldorf.de/letour/medienportal.

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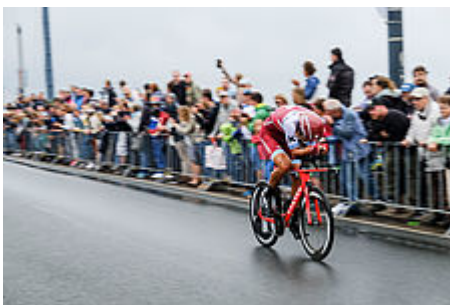
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the 1st stage of the Tour de France is underway; La 1ère étape du Tour de France a démarré à Düsseldorf, ©Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf/Melanie Zanin

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Prince Albert II. signs the Golden Book of the City, ©Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf/Michael Gstettenbauer

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Heiko Maas, Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection, signs the Golden Book of the City, ©Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf/Michael



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Laura Élodie Flessel-Colovic, Sports Minister of France, signs the Golden Book of the City, ©Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf/Michael Gstettenbauer

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