



## Pressedienst

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Jul. 02, 2017

### **More than a million fans at the cycling festival in Düsseldorf**

**Mayor Geisel: "Düsseldorf presented itself as a good host and an enthusiastic organiser"/Cycling pros of the Tour de France were celebrated at the 2nd stage**

Grand final of the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017: the four-day kick-off of the Tour de France (29 June to 2 July) culminated in a cycling festival on Sunday, 2 July. In Düsseldorf some 700,000 to 800,000 spectators celebrated the 196 cyclists who entered the 2nd stage of the Tour de France. On the rainy Saturday afternoon, 1 July, around 500,000 fans had already followed the 1st stage, the spectacular individual time trials in the state capital. Here, Düsseldorf was presented around the world with impressive TV pictures, from the helicopter as well as from the many camera teams and from motorbikes.

Mayor Thomas Geisel: "How the citizens and the guests from Germany and abroad defied the rain and celebrated a cycling festival was fantastic! All the cyclists were enthusiastically cheered on. In this way, Düsseldorf presented itself as a good host and an enthusiastic organiser. The French Sports Minister, the French Ambassador and the Mayor of Paris were also delighted by the friendly atmosphere in the state capital. Here, I would also like to thank the many helpers who contributed to this success. Naturally, the victory of Marcel Kittel is now the icing on the cake."

#### **The wearer of the yellow jersey signed the Golden Book**

At 12.03 am, the cyclists already rode from Tonhallenufer via Joseph-Beuys-Ufer to Burgplatz. There they signed in in front of enthusiastic spectators and presented themselves to the audience. The wearer of the yellow jersey, Geraint Thomas, signed the Golden Book of the state capital Düsseldorf on the A.S.O. stage. Beforehand, the Mayor Thomas Geisel had already welcomed numerous honorary guests at a reception in the town hall, together with the Interior Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia Herbert Reul. Then the Tour retinue rolled leisurely from the town hall through the city centre, past





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happy faces and outstretched arms which received frequent high-fives from the pros. The eight-kilometre neutralised route led to the Media Harbour and was interrupted at the Living Bridge for a short ceremony.

### **After the ceremony, the race began**

There, the European anthem was played and the French and the German national anthems were sung by three tenors. They were accompanied by a 25-member orchestra. At 12.30 am the pros then assembled at the official start at Fischerstraße. Their breath-taking journey took them to the horse race track, and in the forest section Grafenberger Wald they battled for the first points of the mountains classification. Then they rode through Gerresheim in the direction of Erkrath, Mettmann, Ratingen and back to Düsseldorf. The cyclists crossed the Rhine again in Düsseldorf via Theodor-Heuss Bridge and rode through Niederkassel to the district of Oberkassel.

At kilometre 52, the peloton left the city of Düsseldorf and entered the district Rhein-Kreis Neuss, cycling through Meerbusch to Neuss. The first sprint classification of this year's Tour de France took place at kilometre 83 in the town centre of Mönchengladbach. Through the district Kreis Heinsberg, past the open-cast mine Garzweiler 1, the cyclists then reached the district of Düren and the historic town of Jülich, which was part of France from 1794 to 1814 belonging to the Département de la Roer. After the district of Aachen with the towns of Alsdorf and Würselen, the cathedral city of Aachen was the last German town that the cyclists of the Tour de France 2017 pedalled through. They then crossed the German-Belgian border via the B264. The last 51 kilometres of the stage were fought out on Belgian soil and led to the finish line of the 2nd stage: Liège.

### **Düsseldorf celebrated along the Tour route**

At the "Festival du Tour" on the meadows at the state government, there was a big programme with information on all aspects of cycling, rousing stage acts and hands-on activities. And the focus was always on the Tour - through transmission on an LED wall, the fans were always at the height of the action of the 2nd stage in Düsseldorf and on the onward route to Liège.

The Tour was also celebrated in a variety of ways in parts of Düsseldorf along



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the route of the 2nd stage. Among other things, the citizens' movement of the European advocates "Pulse of Europe" took part with an action at the Tour start. On the meadows next to the Rhine in Oberkassel, "Pulse of Europe" greeted the cyclists and the TV viewers around the world with a choreography in the blue colours of the European Union. On Quadenhofstraße there was a big street party with 12 Gerresheim clubs taking part. One eye catcher was also the Fortuna action on a field at Bergischen Landstraße. There, a large cyclist was depicted with banners and tarpaulins, whose wheels consist of the Fortuna logo.

Before the start of the neutralisation, the mood along the route was already exuberant. This was due to the publicity caravan, which already set off from Burgplatz at 10 am like a carnival procession and drove through the town distributing small gifts.

### **Mayor Geisel thanked the Tour Makers at a pasta party**

Today, Sunday, 2 July, the Mayor Thomas Geisel already visited the volunteers in the athletics hall at the Arena-Sportpark, where the hard-working helpers were served with pasta dishes in best sporting fashion. The Mayor thanked the helpers for their unpaid and untiring commitment, which significantly contributed to the smooth running of the Grand Départ.

Some 2,300 assignments were carried out by the voluntary helpers. The varied tasks ranged from child care at the Petit Départ, to the manning of the information stands at the main station and airport, to the work as stewards in the entire city area, providing the numerous visitors with advice, help, guidance and practical tips. In this way, the volunteers made a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the world's largest cycling event.

The volunteers didn't just come from Düsseldorf and the region. Helpers had also registered from Berlin, Leipzig, Hamburg, Frankfurt and Munich, but also from Utrecht and Roermond (Netherlands), Eupen (Belgium), London (England), Vienna (Austria) and Södertälje (Sweden) among other places. People even travelled from Canada and Australia to lend a hand at the Grand Départ.



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As a thank you for their tireless dedication, each volunteer is to receive a voucher for a Fortuna home game in the coming season. In addition, in August there will be a special showing for all the volunteers at the open-air cinema on the banks of the Rhine.

All the media information of the state capital of Düsseldorf on the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017 can be found in our media portal at [www.duesseldorf.de/letour/medienportal](http://www.duesseldorf.de/letour/medienportal).

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(Fr. I.) Düsseldorf's Chief Constable Norbert Wessler, Minister of the Interior of North Rhine-Westphalia Herbert Reul and Mayor Thomas Geisel,  
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