

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 2nd of October 2006

Zabel for a fourth crown

For the last of the big French Classics, the World elite of cycling traditionally prepares the most impressive bunched sprint of the season. The specialists of the last few metres have the habit of performing in some important places where the legend of sprinting is written: the Via Roma for Milan San Remo, the Champs-Élysées for the last stage finish of the Tour de France, the final part of the World Championships and of course the famous avenue de Grammont in Tours. Quite a few of the pack's best sprinters have already failed to impress this year. Tom Boonen, recently dispossessed of his rainbow jersey is seriously counting on the final straight in Tours (where he had already triumphed during the Tour de France in 2005) to finish his season off in style. But title holder Erik Zabel, only just beaten by Bettini in the Salzburg race, also has the intention of triumphing: a fourth success would put him on top of the multiple winners' hierarchy. Race contenders are fairly numerous for a first win in the Touraine area when they take off next Sunday in Saint-Arnoult-en-Yvelines: Thor Hushovd, green jersey of the 2005 Tour de France, Oscar Freire two time winner this season on the Tour or Daniele Bennati, will all take off to win. After 254,5 kilometres of riding, one will need to be extra powerful.

The favourites from the 24 teams

Germany

Gerolsteiner : Förtser, Schumacher, Lang (ALL)
T-Mobile : Sinkewitz, Wesemann, Pollack (ALL)

Belgium

Chocolade Jacques Topsport : Eeckhout (BEL)
Davitamon-Lotto : Horner (USA), Mattan, Steels (BEL)
Landbouwkrediet – Colnago : Amorison (BEL)
Quick Step – Innergetic : Boonen, Van Impe (BEL),
 Pozzato (ITA)

Denmark

Team CSC : Cancellara (SUI), O'Grady (AUS),
 Michaelsen (DAN)

Spain

Caisse d'Épargne – Iles Balears : J-I. Gutierrez,
 Reynes (ESP)
Euskaltel – Euskadi : Isasi, Landaluze (ESP)
Saunier-Duval – Prodir : Pagliarini (BRE)

France

AG2R Prévoyance : Dumoulin, J-P. Nazon (FRA)
Agritubel : Baranauskas (LIT), Coutouly (FRA)
Bouygues Telecom : Geslin, Voeckler (FRA), Florencio
 (ESP)
Cofidis crédit par téléphone : Marichal (BEL),
 Moreni (ITA)

Crédit Agricole : Hushovd (NOR), Kirsipuu
 (EST)
Française des Jeux : Gilbert (BEL), Guesdon
 (FRA)

Great Britain

Unibet.com : Cooke (AUS), Hunt (GBR)

Italy

Lampre – Fondital : Bennati, Ballan,
 Napolitano (ITA)
Liquigas : Backstedt (SUE), Paolini, Quinziano
 (ITA)
Team Milram : Zabel (ALL)

Netherland

Rabobank : Freire, Flecha (ESP), Posthuma
 (HOL)
Skil-Shimano : Tjallingii, Vierhouten (HOL)

Switzerland

Phonak Hearing Systems : Clerc (SUI), Guidi
 (ITA)

USA

Discovery Channel : Devolder, Hoste (BEL)

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PRESS RELEASE



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