

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1st of March 2006

RENDEZ VOUS IN NICE

Team CSC, victorious of the last two editions has become a specialist at triumphing early in the season. With Jorg Jaksche in 2004, and then Bobby Julich in 2005, team director Bjarn Riis made the best of the 'Race to the Sun' to prove what great work his group had done during the winter break and settle his side in a winning dynamic. Back from California, the Danish team is well decided to make the best of the peloton's long road south between the 5th and 12th of March. If the title holder alongside Jens Voigt, will be expected to shine in the final overall standings, David Zabriskie, 2nd in California might not only hope to capture the prologue, like he had done during the 2005 Tour de France. To hope for glory, Julich and his team mates will have to make sure they keep a close eye on the man that beat them all in the United-States: Floyd Landis (PHO). The strongest riders during the first weeks of the 2006 season will have to fight it out on Paris-Nice with fierce opposition like the best young rider of the last Tour de France Yaroslav Popovych (Ukr – DSC) making his season debut, but also the likes of Erik Dekker (Hol – RAB), Chris Horner (Usa – DVL) or Allan Davis (Aus – LSW). Added to that, the sprint specialists will be fighting it out with World Champion Tom Boonen (Bel – QST), who proved to be almost unstoppable during the Tour of Qatar, but a lot less on the Tour of Andalusia, where he was twice beaten by Alessandro Petacchi. Concerning the French riders, one can expect to be ambitious both for the overall standing and stage wins with men like Christophe Moreau (A2R), Sandy Casar (FDJ), Sylvain Chavanel (COF), Thomas Voeckler (BTL), Cyril Dessel (A2R) or David Moncoutié (COF).

The favourites from the 21 teams

Germany

Gerolsteiner : Wegmann (ALL)
T-Mobile Team : Kirchen (LUX), Sinkewitz (ALL)

Belgium

Davitamon - Lotto : Mattan, Steels (BEL), Horner (USA)
Quickstep : Boonen (BEL), Vasseur (FRA)

Denmark

Team CSC : Voigt (ALL), Sastre (ESP), Julich (USA)

Spain

Euskatel - Euskadi : H.Zubeldia, S.Sanchez (ESP)
Caisse d'Epargne - Illes Balears : Portal (FRA), I.Gutierrez (ESP)
Liberty Seguros Team : Kashechkin (KAZ), Davis (AUS)
Saunier Duval - Prodir : Fritsch (FRA), Ventoso (ESP)

United States

Discovery Channel Team : Popovych (UKR), Azevedo (POR)

France

Bouygues Telecom : Voeckler, Rous, Fedrigo (FRA)
Credit Agricole : Kirsipuu (EST), Caucchioli (ITA)
Cofidis crédit par téléphone : Moncoutié, Sy.Chavanel (FRA), Wiggins (GBR)
FDJeux.com : Casar (FRA), McGee (AUS)
AG2R Prevoyance : Moreau, Dessel, Dumoulin (FRA)
Agritubel : Salmon (FRA), Mercado (ESP)

Italy

Team Milram : Celestino (ITA), Grivko (UKR)
Lampre : Petrov (RUS)
Liquigas : Cioni (ITA)

Netherlands

Rabobank : E.Dekker, Posthuma (HOL)

Switzerland

Phonak Hearing Systems : Merckx (BEL), Landis (USA)

Find all the information on www.letour.fr

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