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TOUR DOWN UNDER: EWAN VINCE ANCHE IN SALITA!

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A cura di Matt Poyner, corrispondente dall'Australia per InBici Magazine

Condizioni di gara molto piacevoli salutano i corridori al via, con 23 gradi alla partenza di Woodside. Il finale di tappa prevede la salita finale di Stirling con altre tre ascese al 10% di pendenza. Questa tappa è adatta a un corridore in grado di cavarsela in salita con uno sprint potente. Sulla carta, Diego Ulissi (UAE) Jay McCarthy (BOH) sono uomini ideale per questo tipo di finale avendo vinto entrambi qui in passato, ma anche il “missile tascabile” australiano Caleb Ewan (LOT) ha già dettato legge su questa salita.

Dopo 20 chilometri dalla partenza, la Deceuninck – Quickstep di Sam Bennett fa il ritmo in difesa della maglia di leader.

Joey Roskopf (CCC) ha portato via la fuga a 96 km dall'arrivo insieme a Samuel Jenner (AUS), Laurens De Vreese (AST) e Omer Goldstein (ISN).

La fuga ha avuto un vantaggio di 1 minuto e 40 secondi, ma era ciò che il gruppo gli permetteva di fare oggi. Le condizioni meteorologiche favorevoli mai avute quest'anno ad Adelaide, nell'Australia meridionale, stanno avendo un grande impatto sull'entusiasmo di tutti i ciclisti. Sono finiti i giorni con oltre 40 gradi.

Mentre la fuga si avvicinava al traguardo, con esposto il cartello dei 2 giri da percorrere, il divario era chiuso di soli 40 secondi, ma poi c'è stato un attacco di Laurens De Vreese (AST) che ha rapidamente aperto un divario sui corridori in fuga.

Gli attaccanti sono stati inghiottiti dal gruppo, mentre De Vreese ha continuato con un gap di 45 secondi, cercando di vincere la tappa e il premio di più combattivo del giorno.



Santos Tour Down Under 2020 – 2nd stage Woodside – Stirling 135,8 km – 22/01/2020 – Caleb Ewan (AUS – Lotto Soudal) – photo Dario Belingheri/BettiniPhoto©2020

A soli 25 chilometri dalla fine, il corridore della Astana è stato catturato dal Deceuninck – Quickstep e i corridori hanno iniziato il circuito finale.

Il ritmo è aumentato immediatamente, ma la velocità media ha permesso a tutte le squadre di velocisti proteggere ancora corridori del calibro di Sam Bennett, Caleb Ewan e Jasper Phillipsen mentre il gruppo si avvicinava a 16 chilometri dall'ultima salita.

La EF Education First è stata la prima squadra ad accendere la miccia a 15 km dal traguardo nel momento esatto in cui il campione del mondo a cronometro Rohan Dennis (INEOS) dovuto cambiare la bici.

Mancano 12 chilometri e il Team Israel Start Up Nation tiene il “Gorilla” Andre Greipel in testa al gruppo, segno che il ritmo si adatta oggi ai velocisti.

Rohan Dennis è tornato in gruppo a 8 km dalla fine, ma ci sono stati incidenti sparsi lungo la strada mentre i corridori hanno lottato duramente per mantenere la posizione.

A 1500 metri dall'arrivo sono stati coinvolti circa 20 ciclisti in una caduta. Simon Yates (MTS) zoppicava sul ciglio della strada e sembrava essere uno dei più colpiti dall'incidente. L'incidente è avvenuto negli ultimi 3 KM, quindi il tempo è stato neutralizzato.

Nell'ultimo chilometro la Mitchelton Scott controllava lo sprint con Lucas Hamilton che portava a 600 metri dal traguardo Cameron Meyer, incaricato di lanciare Daryl Impey sulla linea d'arrivo. Quest'ultimo è stato perfetto ma non ha eguagliato la velocità e la classe di Caleb Ewan, che ha sorvolato tutti gli altri per vincere con 3 bici di vantaggio.

English version

The weather is expected to reach 23 degrees Celsius so very pleasant conditions greet our riders today. It will however get very hard with the climbing that comes towards the end of the Stirling stage with three ascents of the 10% gradient finishing straight.

The stage usually suits the puncheur style rider! A rider who can climb but also packs a powerful sprint. Diego Ulissi (UAE) Jay McCarthy (BOH) are ideally suited to this stage having both won here in the past but Australia's "pocket rocket" Caleb Ewan (LOT) has also triumphed here in the past.

The riders set off on the opening circuits of Woodside and with both Subaru KOM sprint points on this circuit it wasn't long before the early break made its way off the front of the peloton.

Samuel Jenner (AUS) & Joey Roskopf (CCC) set about establishing the break and quickly led by 20 seconds in front of a chasing pair of Laurens De Vreese (AST) & Omer Goldstein (ISN).

Roskopf who is on equal points with KOM leader Jarrad Drizners (AUS) overnight was purely looking for the lead in the Mountains classification today and went through the first KOM in 1st place in front of Jenner.

119km to go and the two became four with De Vreese & Goldstein joining the leaders.

20 kilometres into the stage and the peloton is allowing Tour Leader Sam Bennett's team (Deceuninck – Quickstep) set the pace in defence of the leaders Ochre jersey.

Joey Roskopf (CCC) attacked the breakaway at 96 km to go as the 2nd KOM sprint loomed ahead at the 92km to go point of the race. He crossed the summit of the KOM 16 seconds ahead of the 3 breakaway companions before easing off and being picked up by them as they headed away from the Woodside circuit and towards "Mylor" on their way to the final three finishing circuits of 21 kilometres each around the town of Stirling.

The Breakaway had a gap of 1 minute and 40 seconds but that was pretty much as far as the peloton was allowing them today. The kinder weather conditions this year in Adelaide, South Australia, is having a big effect on the enthusiasm of all the riders. Gone are the 40 plus degrees days of last year.

The first of the "time bonus" sprints on the final finishing circuits was taken by Omar Goldstein with no challenge from the breakaway companions. The average speed of the race to this point was a comfortable 38kph with only 55 kilometres to go.

As the breakaway approached the finish line to see 2 laps to go the gap had closed to just 40 seconds but then there was a very big attack by Laurens De Vreese (AST) and he quickly opened a gap on the breakaway riders and took out the second "time bonus" sprint.



Santos Tour Down Under 2020 – 2nd stage Woodside – Stirling 135,8 km – 22/01/2020 – Domen Novak (SLO – Bahrain – McLaren) – Marco Haller (AUT – Bahrain – McLaren) – photo Dario Belingheri/BettiniPhoto©2020

The break was swallowed up by the mainly intact peloton as De Vreese pushed on with a gap of 45 seconds, he was trying for a stage win and the most aggressive rider prize of the day.

With just 25 kilometres to go the Astana rider was caught by the Deceuninck – Quickstep led peloton and it was all eyes towards the bell at the finish line in Stirling as the riders started the final circuit.

The pace increased straight away but the earlier calm average speed saw all of the sprinter teams still protecting the likes of Sam Bennett, Caleb Ewan & Jasper Phillipsen (UAE) as the group approached 16 kilometres to go and only the final climb to come.

EF Education First was the first team to light the fuse 15 km from the finish at the exact time World Time Trial Champion Rohan Dennis (INEOS) had an unfortunate bike change.

12 kilometres to go and Team Israel Start Up Nation were keeping the “Gorilla” Andre Greipel to the front of the peloton a sign that the pace was suiting the sprinters today.

Rohan Dennis returned to the peloton with 8 km to go but there were crashes dotted along the road as riders fought hard for position as space on the road was running out.

<https://www.facebook.com/tourdownunder/videos/221612385497482/>

Bora Hansgrohe and Mitchelton Scott were drag racing each other at the front of the peloton as the bunch went through 5 kilometres to go each team protecting their leaders Jay Mc Carthy and Daryll Impey.

The peloton of around 100 was down to only 40 riders with 3 kilometres left as the GC contenders were now clearly having to share the road with the top sprinters of the race still in contention on today’s stage.

CRASH CRASH CRASH with 1500 metres to go and some 20 riders were involved! Simon Yates (MTS) limped off to the roadside and looked to be one of the most effected from the crash. The crash took place inside the final 3 KM so no time to be lost by the riders on the floor.

Inside the final kilometre and Mitchellton Scott controlled the sprint with Lucas Hamilton leading to 600 metres to go before “Australian Road Champion” Cameron Meyer took over to try and Launch Daryll Impey to the line.

Impey was perfect but he was no match to the speed & class of Caleb Ewan as he flew past all of the others to win by some 3 bike lengths at the line.

Caleb Ewan: The team is the reason you win races like this, you can't do it by yourself. After yesterday's disappointment I told the team I would need all their help to win. We spent one hour in the hotel room last night discussing what we needed to do and toady it has worked.

Matt Poyner for InBici Magazine

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