

"Vuelta a Andalucía": Oscar Freire wins the third stage

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Great performance for Katusha Team in "Vuelta a Andalucía" third stage, a 157-km long one from Montemayor to Las Gabias: after yesterday's second place from Denis Menchov, Oscar Freire took his second victory of the season after the one in "Tour Down Under". The Spanish champion took advantage of the great work of the whole team, which as soon as the daily breakaway was neutralized, with 15 kilometres to go, imposed its pace to the group: especially during the last climbing, which started with 6 kilometres to go, the Russian team made a huge selection in the main group with its rhythm, so that Freire could easily prevail over his rivals in the last downhill kilometre thanks to his first-class sprinter qualities. Second position for Daniel Schorn (NetApp); Michael Matthews (Rabobank) completes the podium. Nothing changed in general classification: with just one stage to the finish of the competition, yesterday's stage winner Alejandro Valverde (Movistar) holds the leadership, while Denis Menchov is 4th with a 14'' gap.

"Today the team worked really well for me - said Freire - we managed to keep a high rhythm and not so many riders could stay with us. Regarding the sprint, I knew the last, difficult bend was more important than the last straight, which was downhill: it was not an easy rush, but Paolini's almost taken me to the end. Our team spirit

is great, we're improving day by day, so I think this year we can get great result, also in more prestigious races. I feel in a good shape: obviously I'm not at my best level, also because there's no need to be at this time of the season, but I'm working well in order to be at my top later. Anyways, these two victories are very important because they give us the right motivations for continuing this way and maybe improve."

"Everything was perfect today - said the Sport Directors Dmitrii Konyshev - we prepared very well this stage's strategy and in the end we took a deserved victory. All the team worked great for giving Freire the chance to win this stage: in the end we imposed our pace to the group and we did a huge selection, so that our sprints' leader

could fight with less rivals. Obviously, we know Oscar's talent in this kind of situation: he's a great champion, and even if the final part was not easy because of some dangerous bends, he managed to win quite easily. I'm very happy for this result and, most of all, for all our riders work: today we proved we're already team".