



Tour Down Under: Freire brings to Katusha the first victory of 2012

First victory in the 2012 season for Katusha Team: Oscar Freire was the fastest in Tour Down Under's fourth stage, from Norwood to Tanunda, decided by a bunch sprint. The Russian Team was active since the first kilometres of the race: Gatis Smukulis took part to the daily breakaway, which started after 28 kilometres from the start, reaching a peak of 4'. The escape was neutralized 30 kilometres on 130 to go, just before the beginning of the first category climb which characterized the stage's profile: the mountain made a good selection in the group, leaving just 48 riders to fight for win on Tanunda's finishing line. Katusha Team was able to take the group ahead under control thanks to the presence of Belkov, Florencio, Vorganov, Caruso and Freire: the latter, at the final sprint, was able to take a great victory defeating Gerald Ciolek (Omega Pharma-Quick Step) and Daniele Bennati (RadioShack-Nissan), respectively second and third. In general classification, Freire moved to the second position together with Michael Matthews (Rabobank), 2' far from the new leader Martin Kohler (BMC): tomorrow's stage, the last but one, will be crucial on the final result.

"I am really happy with my performance today and with this first victory - said Freire - which I could reach so early in the season. But, more than that, I'm really glad I won for my new team Katusha. Today was a hard stage, but I was feeling very well, especially during the climbs. At the same time, my teammates were always close to me, helping me a lot. They did their best for today's victory, which is not only mine but my teammates' too".

"Today, we did a good race - said the Sport Director Dmitry Konyshov - everything, in general, went along with the plan before the stage. We knew about this climb with 20 kilometers to go, which could be a crucial moment for the race. Oscar was in a good shape, so the team put its effort for him during the whole stage, but especially on the climb and at last kilometers. All teams, which have their leaders in the main group, tried to do their best to short the group before the bunch sprint, and so we did. In the final part of the stage we had around 40 riders in the bunch. Freire did a perfect sprint and won nicely. Tomorrow's stage will be crucial for

general classification: we will try to do our best to help Freire to achieve a good result. He was feeling in a good shape today on the climbs, so we hope, tomorrow he can be in first positions. Besides, we have Eduard Vorganov, who has been very active all race long: he's 9th, 8'' far from the leader, so he can fight for the final win too".