**Slovenian joy in Rýmařov. Ravbar dominated the sprint, Tomas Pridal finished eighth**

Slovenian cyclist Anže Ravbar won the second stage of the Peace Race under 23, which took place on Friday from Uničov to Rýmařov. The 20-year-old cyclist, who belongs to the UAE Emiratex Gen Z squad, outclassed the Nordic riders in the mass finish. Sebastian Veslum of Norway was second, his compatriot Morthen Baksaas was third and Denmark's Conrad Haugsted was fourth. The best of the Czech line-up was eighth-placed Tomáš Přidal.

The peloton set off from Uničov for the second leg, which was 149 kilometres with an elevation gain of 2195 metres. While the start took place in cold weather, when the thermometer showed thirteen degrees Celsius, the climax in the crowded square in Rýmařov was accompanied by a pleasant temperature of twenty degrees.

"The mass sprint does not suit me very well. I rode up the hill and then I was lucky with the people who pulled me up, otherwise I would have been 50th. Without that I couldn't have been there, I was lucky today," said Pridal. The third stage with the finish on Dlouhé stráně is a real bugbear. "The tactic will be to stay at the front and try for the finish at the top, but you can't hook it together there, so I'll see what the legs are like," he added.

A group of five riders found themselves at the front after the initial attacks, including Austria's Matthias Gusner, Italy's Riccardo Lorello, Israel's Matar Peretz, Slovakia's Samuel Novák and, wearing the Czech jersey, Stepan Zahalka. Even when passing the Kružberk and Slezská Harta reservoirs the peloton's deficit rather increased and reached two minutes and ten seconds. After eighty kilometres the riders had an average speed of forty-one kilometres per hour.

With thirty-six kilometres to go, the main field began to pick up the pace and quickly erased the gap to the breakaway group. After a fleeting passage through the finish town of Rýmařov, the leading riders had only thirty seconds to spare, and fifteen kilometres before the finish the leading group was caught. The predicted scenario with a mass finish was not changed by the 3300-metre climb with the exit to Ondřejov with an average gradient of 5.2 per cent, followed by only a two-kilometre descending finish of the stage.

Ravbar, who for the second year in a row belongs to the UAE Emirates' reserve line-up, was the strongest in the sprint, from which he should prospectively advance to the elite alongside Tadej Pogačar. At the same time, the Slovenian moved up to second in the standings, one second behind the winner of Thursday's stage, Frenchman Victor Loulerguo, who continues to dominate the points competition.

Tomáš Přidal remains the best of the Czech riders in seventeenth position with a gap of twenty-three seconds, while Štěpán Zahálka was named the greatest fighter of today's stage for his work in the breakaway. "Hats off to him, I wouldn't have been able to do it today," praised Přidal.

