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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Dalby Dominates Battle at Dlouhé Stráně, Martí Takes Yellow**

Danish cyclist Simon Dalby won the queen stage of the Peace Race U23, being the first to cross the finish line of the third leg from Zábřeh to Dlouhé stráně. Spain's Pau Martí followed closely behind the winner, finishing third at the summit of the demanding climb, becoming the new holder of the yellow jersey as the leading rider. He will defend his lead in Sunday's final stage from Jeseník to Šumperk, holding a two-second advantage over Dalby.

"The ascent to Dlouhé stráně was very fast, and not steep enough to create larger gaps. But thanks to the time bonus, I moved into the lead. We have a good team here, and I believe we will take the yellow jersey back to Spain," Pau Martí commented after reaching an altitude of 1320 metres.

During Saturday's stage, cyclists had to cover 131 kilometres, overcoming an elevation gain of 2847 metres. From the opening kilometres, a series of attacks led to a group of nine riders forming at the front. However, the peloton caught this group at the foot of Dlouhé stráně, and the final climb, as anticipated, determined the outcome. Simon Dalby showed the most strength in the challenging finish, benefiting from teamwork with his national teammate Peter Oxenberg, who will ride the final stage in the white jersey as the best U21 rider.

For the twenty-two-year-old Dalby, this marks his second career victory at the Peace Race; he previously won a stage with a finish at Červenohorské sedlo in 2023. "The final climb was surprisingly easy; many teams no longer had anyone pulling. Still, I didn't believe we could break away, but in the end, Peter and I managed it together in the final kilometre. I won the queen stage two years ago when I finished second overall. Tomorrow, I will definitely try to go for the yellow jersey, but it certainly won't be easy," Dalby remarked.

Martí has been among the leaders in the provisional overall standings since the first stage, holding third position before today's leg. His third-place finish at Dlouhé stráně propelled him into the lead, and he also tops the points classification. The best Czech rider was Tomáš Přidal, who finished sixteenth, losing twenty-nine seconds and improving his overall standing by three positions to fourteenth place. "I believed in myself; the guys from the team worked for me all day. I knew I couldn't react to accelerations and had to maintain my own pace to last until the end," added the 21-year-old Czech rider.

In the final stage, Martí will defend a mere two-second lead over Dalby, with third-placed Oxenberg six seconds behind. This year's Peace Race for U23 riders will conclude with a 118-kilometre route from Jeseník to Šumperk, featuring an elevation gain of 1883 metres, with an expected mass finish. Prior to the finish of the queen stage, the MND Children's Race took place in nearby Kouty nad Desnou, with over 130 young cyclists participating.