

Maxim Van Gils wins the Eschborn-Frankfurt cycling classic

Maxim Van Gils (Lotto Dstny) has won the 61st edition of Eschborn-Frankfurt. The Belgian won the cycling classic on 1 May in the sprint of a group of almost 30 riders ahead of the Spaniard Alex Aranburu (Movistar) and Riley Sheehan (Israel - Premier Tech) from the United States. Breakaway rider Jan Christen (UAE Team Emirates), who was able to pull away by up to 30 seconds on the final crossing of the Mammolshain climb, was only caught with a good two kilometres to go. Last year's winner Søren Kragh Andersen (Alpecin - Deceuninck) finished eighth, Jonas Rutsch (EF Education - EasyPost) was the best German in 17th place.

It was John Degenkolb (Team dsm-firmenich PostNL) himself who opened the race immediately after the sharp start. The 35-year-old and his two companions Jacopo Mosca (Lidl-Trek) and Warre Vangheluwe (Soudal Quick-Step) quickly pulled away to a maximum lead of a good seven minutes.

Before the race went over the Feldberg for the second time, Vangheluwe was the last escapee to be caught 89 kilometres before the finish. Degenkolb had already secured the mountain classification. The peloton continued to shrink on the climb. There were several attacks, Emanuel Buchmann (Bora - hansgrohe) and Ben Healy (EF Education - Easy Post) were among the most active riders. They were able to break away from the rest in the meantime, but before the final climb up the Mammolshainer Stich, everything had converged again.

Christen attacked in Mammolshain. The 19-year-old Swiss rider pulled out a lead of up to half a minute on around 30 chasers, but was caught 2300 metres before the finish. Van Gils, who recently finished third and fourth at Fleche Wallonne and Liège-Bastogne-Liège and also stormed onto the podium at Strade Bianche, then proved to be the strongest in the sprint.

Maxin Van Gils: *"My legs weren't that good. I was also struggling with the heat. But everything came together in the end and I was able to sprint to victory. This success means a lot to me because it's my first victory on the WorldTour. Now I need a break because the first part of the season was very tough. After that, I'll focus on the Tour de Suisse and the Tour de France."*

Alex Aranburu: *"I'm absolutely happy with the result. I had a good feeling right from the start and was able to realise that quite well."*

Riley Sheehan: *"It was pretty tough. I was dropped on the last climb and also on the one before that. But I was able to fight my way back and recover a bit. I was a bit built up in the final, but my legs were pretty good"*

again. Overall, it was great here. If the weather in Germany is always this good, I'll come here more often. And the spectators all along the course were incredible. That's exactly what I needed during the race."

John Degenkolb: *"Given the circumstances I've spent the last three weeks in, today was the absolute maximum I could get out of it. A fortnight ago, I wasn't even sure if I would be able to start at all. In the end, the knee didn't bother me at all today, but with only one week of training it was of course anything but ideal. I had already thought about this breakaway beforehand but hadn't talked about it with anyone except my wife. The fact that I was even able to win the mountain classification was the icing on the cake."*

Fabian Wegmann, the sporting director, drew an all-round positive conclusion: *"It was a very, very successful event. We couldn't have imagined better weather. After the very cold and disgusting spring, the riders deserved it. That's another reason why we had virtually no crashes. In sporting terms, the race was basically the same as last year. There was a leading group, which was then left to flounder a little. Jan Christen, who attacked at the Mammolshainer Stich and was caught shortly before the finish, is a super rider who we'll be hearing a lot more about in the future. In the end, he had no chance on his own. And so Maxim van Gils, a real classics rider, won - but this is also a cycling classic."*