

TOUR OF MAJORCA 2007 – Race Report



Five debut for T-Mobile in Mallorca

Five T-Mobile riders will make their season debut in the five day Mallorca Challenge, which starts this Sunday, February 11 on the Balearic island. Linus Gerdemann, Giuseppe Guerini, André Korff, Patrik Sinkewitz and Thomas Ziegler will be testing their winter training in the races, which traditionally kick off the Spanish season. Another eight riders will take part in the races, some of whom have competed in Qatar, and others who are doing the Etoile des Besseges: Eric Baumann, Marcus Burghardt, Bernhard Eisel, Bert Grabsch, Andreas Klier, Servais Knaven, Lorenzo Bernucci and Scott Davis.

Mallorca will also mark the debut of Jan Schaffrath as a sports director. The 35 year-old retired from cycling in 2005 after having raced for nine years, all of which were with T-Mobile (Telekom). He will join the more experienced Valerio Piva as a team director.

"The race's main purpose is to get our classics specialists fitter for their upcoming tasks," said Piva. "After riding at high speeds on the flat course in Qatar, the different terrain in the tour stages will offer the best pre-conditions to test out their form for the spring."

Overall placings will not be the main focus for T-Mobile in Mallorca. "We have a large contingent of pros and want to give everyone the

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chance of showing what they're capable of," said Piva. "That means 'Die Mannschaft' will always be able to show a new face."

The tour, which is actually a collection of five one-day races, kicks off with a flat stage starting and finishing in Palma, Mallorca's capital. The Trofeo Alcudia on Monday is a showcase for sprinters, before Tuesday's Trofeo Pollença takes the 21 teams to the mountains for the final three days. Here the peloton will have to conquer a 880 metre climb up Coll de Puig Major, which also features in the Trofeo Pollença and Trofeo Sóller that follow.

Piva predicted that it will be the Spanish cyclists again that will have the best chances of claiming overall victory. Twelve Spanish teams will be competing this year. The last time a non-Spaniard won was back in 2001 when Australian Matthew Hayman was crowned overall winner.

Race list

February 11: Trofeo Mallorca (Palma - Palma, 100 km)

February 12: Trofeo Alcudia (Cala Millor - Cala Bona, 159.4 km)

February 13: Trofeo Pollença (Pollença - Mirador Des Colomer, 149.6 km)

February 14: Trofeo Sóller (Sóller - Port de Sóller, 150.6 km)

February 15: Trofeo Calvia (Magalluf - Palmanova, 149.3 Km)

Freire opens up in Mallorca

Oscar Freire (Rabobank) won the first stage of the Mallorca Challenge, a 100 km circuit race in Palma. The Spaniard beat José Joaquín Rojas (Caisse d'Epargne) and Guennadi Mikhailov (Astana) in a bunch sprint, completing the stage in under two hours. Tom Boonen (Quick.Step), Alejandro Valverde (Caisse d'Epargne) and Erik Zabel (Milram) also took part, but didn't figure in the top placings.

Results

- 1 Oscar Freire (Spa, Rabobank) 1:57:08
- 2 José Joaquín Rojas (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne)
- 3 Guennadi Mikhailov (Rus, Astana)
- 4 Koldo Fernández (Spa, Euskaltel-Euskadi)
- 5 Enrico Gasparotto (Ita, Liquigas)
- 6 Robert Förster (Ger, Gerolsteiner)
- 7 Francisco José Ventoso (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 8 Bernhard Eisel (Aut, T-Mobile)
- 9 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne)
- 10 Wouter Weylandt (Bel, Quickstep-Innergetic)

12/02/2007

The second stage of the Mallorca Challenge was another bunch sprint, with Illes Balears taking a 1-2 finish. But the mountains loom tomorrow.

PIC BY VUELTAMALLORCA.COM

Local team Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne scored a 1-2 result in the second leg of the Mallorca Challenge, the Trofeo Alcudia. Vicente Reynes sprinted to victory at the end of the 160 km stage, with his teammate Jose Joaquin Rojas holding off Discovery Channel's Tomas Vaitkus for second. Rojas also took over the leadership of the five day race, although he has the same time as Reynes and another 51 riders.

Tomorrow's third stage is between Pollença and Mirador Des Colomer over 161.4 km. It's not one for the sprinters, as it features the Cat. 1 Coll de Puig Major (880m) with under 50 km to go, although there is a chance that the bunch could regroup on the descent.

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Trofeo Alcudia results

- 1 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 3:52:28
- 2 Jose Joaquin Rojas (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne)
- 3 Tomas Vaitkus (Ltu, Discovery Channel)
- 4 Marcel Sieberg (Ger, Team Milram)
- 5 Wouter Weylandt (Bel, Quickstep-Innergetic)
- 6 Marcus Burghardt (Ger, T-Mobile Team)
- 7 Gustavo Dominguez (Spa, Karpin-Galicia)
- 8 Fco. Jose Ventoso (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 9 Enrico Gasparotto (Ita, Liquigas)
- 10 Jesus Del Nero (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)

General classification after stage 2

- 1 Jose Joaquin Rojas (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 5:49:36
- 2 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne)
- 3 Tomas Vaitkus (Ltu, Discovery Channel)
- 4 Enrico Gasparotto (Ita, Liquigas)
- 5 Wouter Weylandt (Bel, Quickstep-Innergetic)
- 6 Fco. Jose Ventoso (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 7 Guennadi Mikhailov (Rus, Astana)
- 8 Bernhard Eisel (Aut, T-Mobile Team)
- 9 Gustavo Dominguez (Spa, Karpin-Galicia)
- 10 Jesus Del Nero (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)



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13/02/2007

Thomas Dekker was the best in the uphill finish at the end of stage 3 of the Challenge Mallorca. But Spaniard Ezequiel Mosquera took the overall lead with two days to go.

PIC BY VUELTA A MALLORCA

Thomas Dekker (Rabobank) has won the third leg of the Challenge Mallorca, beating Vladimir Gusev (Discovery Channel) and Alberto Fernández De La Puebla (Saunier Duval) in the uphill finish on Mirador Des Colomer. But the Dutchman didn't take over in the general classification, as he hasn't ridden all the stages. That honour fell to Ezequiel Mosquera from the new pro continental team Karpin-Galicia, who finished fourth today. He shares the overall GC lead with Gusev, whose team manager Sean Yates told *Procycling* this morning that this stage would be the "first test" of the season for the Russian.

Today's stage saw an early breakaway of 11 riders form after 18 kilometres. The break included Discovery Channel's Thomas Vaitkus, who sat third on GC. But when the break hit the Coll de Sóller, the day's first climb after 85 km, it was reduced to seven riders. On the cat. 1 Coll de Puig Major, a new group of 12 formed in front. But Rabobank and Caisse d'Epargne kept things under control, and the break was caught with eight kilometres to go.

On the uphill finish to Mirador des Colomer, Dekker attacked with Gusev, Fernández and Mosquera. Dekker was able to get away in the final kilometre and won by two seconds over Gusev, with Fernández and Mosquera finishing just behind.

Tomorrow's fourth stage from Sóller to Port de Sóller (164 km) has no uphill finish, but it should be as selective as today's. The final ascent of the Coll de Puig Major has its summit at 16 km to go, with a fast downhill to decide the race in Port de Sóller.

Stage 3 results

- 1 Thomas Dekker (Ned, Rabobank) 3:55:43
- 2 Vladimir Gusev (Rus, Discovery Channel) 0:00:02
- 3 Alberto Fernández De La Puebla (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 4 Ezequiel Mosquera (Spa, Karpin-Galicia)
- 5 Luis León Sánchez (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne) 0:00:07
- 6 David De La Fuente (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir) 0:00:10

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- 7 Lorenzo Bernucci (Ita, T-Mobile) 0:00:12
- 8 José Bonilla (CRc, Fuerteventura-Canarias)
- 9 Stijn Devolder (Bel, Discovery Channel)
- 10 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne)

General classification after stage 3

- 1 Ezequiel Mosquera (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 9:45:21
- 2 Vladimir Gusev (Rus, Discovery Channel)
- 3 Alberto Fernández De La Puebla (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 4 Luis León Sánchez (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne) 0:00:05
- 5 David De La Fuente (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir) 0:00:08
- 6 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Caisse d'Epargne) 0:00:10
- 7 Stijn Devolder (Bel, Discovery Channel)
- 8 José Bonilla (CRc, Fuerteventura-Canarias)
- 9 Pieter Weening (Ned, Rabobank)
- 10 Gustavo Dominguez (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 0:00:14



14/02/2007

Toni Colom (Astana) won the fourth stage of the Challenge Mallorca, but Caisse d'Epargne had a good day all round as Luis León Sánchez took the leader's jersey, and the team also won the TTT opener in the Tour of Med.

PIC BY VUELTA A MALLORCA

Mallorca 4: Colom the best in Port de Sóller

Antonio Colom (Astana) has taken the fourth stage of the Challenge Mallorca in Port de Sóller. The Spaniard beat compatriot Luis León Sánchez (Caisse d'Epargne-Illes Balears) and Alberto Contador (Discovery Channel) in a three man sprint after escaping on the Coll de Puig Major. A larger chase group finished 13 seconds behind, while Sánchez took over the leader's jersey.

The fourth stage started in Sóller shortly before midday with 199 riders. The peloton crossed the cat. 2 Con Costa climb (km 17) intact, with Davide Viganò (Quick.Step) leading it over ahead of Jorge Ferrio (Andalucía-Cajasur) and Josu Mondelo (Extremadura-Spiuk). A group of 16 attacked after 33 km, with Viganò involved again along with Perez and Mayo (Euskaltel-Euskadi), Martínez and Rosendo (Andalucía-Cajasur), Grabsch and Schröder (Milram), Terciado (Relax-Gam), Abril (Viña Magna-Cropu), Morabito (Astana), Lloret (Fuerteventura-Canarias), Gómez (Saunier Duval-Prodir), Baumann and Klier (T-Mobile), Trenti (Liguigas) and Padrnos (Discovery).

The break covered 43 km in the first hour, with Caisse d'Epargne keeping things in check behind. On the day's second climb, Sa Batalla (km 71), the group had 1'30 over the bunch. Baumann took the mountain points there ahead of Schröder and Martínez. The 16 in front kept their speed up at 43 km/h for the second hour, increasing their advantage to 4'47 as Karpin-Galicia began to work in the peloton. On the second ascent of the Coll de Sa Batalla (km 131), it was Martínez leading Schröder and Grabsch over, with the bunch 1'46 back.

As the final climb of the Coll de Puig Major started, the break fell apart and immediately, Colom (Astana), Sánchez (Caisse d'Epargne), Nibali (Liguigas), and Contador (Discovery) attacked. The group had just 20 seconds at the top of the climb with 16 km of downhill to go, and all but Nibali managed to hold off the chasing bunch to the end. Colom was the quickest in the sprint ahead of Sanchez and Contador.

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Tomorrow's final stage is between Magalluf and Palmanova over 147 km. It features a number of cat. 2 and cat. 3 climbs, and doesn't look to be sprinter friendly.

Stage 4 results

- 1 Antonio Colom (Spa, Astana) 04:06:13
- 2 Luis Leon Sanchez (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne)
- 3 Alberto Contador (Spa, Discovery Channel)
- 4 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 00:00:13
- 5 Vincenzo Nibali (Ita, Liquigas)
- 6 Lorenzo Bernucci (Ita, T-Mobile Team)
- 7 Vladimir Gusev (Rus, Discovery Channel)
- 8 Jorge Ferrio (Spa, Andalucia-Cajasur)
- 9 José Adrian Bonilla (CRc, Fuerteventura-Canarias)
- 10 Iker Camaño (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)

General classification after stage 4

- 1 Luis Leon Sanchez (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 13:51:39
- 2 Ezequiel Mosquera (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 00:00:08
- 3 Vladimir Gusev (Rus, Discovery Channel)
- 4 Alberto Fernandez (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 5 David De La Fuente (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir) 00:00:16
- 6 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 00:00:18
- 7 José Adrian Bonilla (CRc, Fuerteventura-Canarias)
- 8 Stijn Devolder (Bel, Discovery Channel) 00:01:18
- 9 Pieter Weening (Ned, Rabobank)
- 10 Gustavo Dominguez (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 00:01:22



15/02/2007

Euskaltel was rewarded for its aggression in the final stage of the Mallorca Challenge, with Unai Etxebarria sprinting to victory.

Further north in the Tour of the Mediterranean, Tinkoff scored another win courtesy of Russian Mikhail Ignatiev.

PIC BY VUELTA A MALLORCA

Mallorca 5: Final stage to Etxebarria; GC to Sánchez

Unai Etxebarria (Euskaltel-Euskadi) has won the final stage of the Mallorca Challenge, a 148 km leg between Magalluf and Palmanova. The Venezuelan was the fastest in the small bunch sprint, with Francisco Ventoso (Saunier Duval) finishing second ahead of Murilo Fischer (Liquigas). The overall classification went to Caisse d'Epargne's Luis León Sánchez, who took over after yesterday's stage.

The final stage started in Magalluf with 199 riders enjoying the sunny conditions. It didn't take long for the first attack to go, with Beñat Albizuri (Euskaltel) breaking clear with Bernhard Eisel (T-Mobile) and Angel Vallejo (Relax-Gam) after three kilometres. Eisel won the first sprint at Calvia (km 4), but then returned to the peloton, leaving the two Spaniards out in front. After 22 km, Albizuri and Vallejo had three minutes as they crested the cat. 2 climb of Sa Gramola. They extended this to 4'03 after 36 km, which they covered in an hour.

After 38 km, García (Relax-Gam) and Contador (Discovery) crashed, with García having to abandon. That didn't deter the two breakaways, who had 2'07 on the Coll De Claret (km 52), where Albizuri preceded Vallejo. Jorge Ferrio (Andalucía-Cajasur) led the bunch over. The pace eased in the peloton, allowing the break to gain another couple of minutes by the sprint at km 64, but it was never going to be enough to stay clear.

On the Coll de Soller (km 84), Albizuri again gained the maximum mountain points with Vallejo in second and Ferrio leading the bunch just 30 seconds back. The fierce pace on the climb split the peloton into four groups, but it all came back together 10 km later, when the break was also caught. Euskaltel kept its aggressive tactic, sending Anton Luengo up the road after 100 km. He lasted until km 107, then Stijn Devolder (Discovery) countered on his own, without success. On

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the second ascent of the Coll De Claret (km 111), Thomas Ziegler (T-Mobile) took the maximum points, with the peloton still together. Joan Horrach (Caisse d'Epargne) had a try after 117 km, then Luis Pérez (Andalucía-Cajasur) a few kilometres later.

Caisse d'Epargne kept control of the peloton and Pérez returned to the fold with 20 km to go. The final climb of the Coll des Tords (km 134) saw Vicente Reynés (Caisse d'Epargne) in front, ahead of race leader Sánchez and Toni Colom (Astana). On the run into the finish, the bunch had thinned down to 40 riders. Although stage 1 winner Oscar Freire (Rabobank) was present, he wasn't among the front runners at the end. Instead it was Unai Etxebarria triumphing ahead of Ventoso and Fischer, with Sánchez finishing 23rd and securing the overall classification.

Stage 5 results

- 1 Unai Etxebarria (Ven, Euskaltel-Euskadi) 3:57:45
- 2 Francisco Jose Ventoso (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir)
- 3 Murilo A. Fischer (Bra, Liquigas)
- 4 David Kopp (Ger, Gerolsteiner)
- 5 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne)
- 6 Koldo Fernandez (Spa, Euskaltel-Euskadi)
- 7 Grégory Rast (Swi, Astana)
- 8 Thomas Ziegler (Ger, T-Mobile Team)
- 9 Kevin Hulsmans (Bel, Quickstep-Innergetic)
- 10 Oscar Freire (Spa, Rabobank)

Final general classification

- 1 Luis Leon Sanchez (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 17:49:24
- 2 Vladimir Gusev (Rus, Discovery Channel) 00:00:08
- 3 Ezequiel Mosquera (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 00:00:08
- 4 Alberto Fernandez (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir) 00:00:08
- 5 Vicente Reynes (Spa, Illes Balears-Caisse d'Epargne) 00:00:18
- 6 José Adrian Bonilla (Crc, Fuerteventura-Canarias) 00:00:18
- 7 David De La Fuente (Spa, Saunier Duval-Prodir) 00:01:13
- 8 Pieter Weening (Ned, Rabobank) 00:01:18
- 9 Gustavo Dominguez (Spa, Karpin-Galicia) 00:01:22
- 10 Diego Gallego (Spa, Viña Magna-Cropu) 00:01:45

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