

Mark Cavendish pedals to history



Takes Tour de France 35th stage win

Astana Qazaqstan Team's British rider Mark Cavendish celebrates as he cycles past the finish line to win the 5th stage of the 111th edition of the Tour de France cycling race, 177.5 km between Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne and Saint-Vulbas, his 35th Tour de France stage victory beating the previous record held by Belgian rider Eddy Merckx,

AFP | Saint-Vulbas, France

Mark Cavendish made Tour de France history yesterday winning a record 35th stage at the age of 39. Briton Cavendish beat Eddy Merckx's mark, which had stood since 1975, on the fifth stage of this year's Tour near the Alps having equalled it in 2021.

"It's my 15th Tour de France and it takes a lot to get here, getting in shape every year," Cavendish said at the line.

"I'm surrounded by incredible people and I owe a lot to them" added Cavendish who made his Tour debut in 2008 before becoming world road race champion three years later.

As the peloton swept through the lush Rhone valley with vine-

yards and pretty villages skirting the river his Astana team hogged the front right of the peloton as light rain fell.

A long home straight in the tiny village of Saint-Vulbas helped them form a lead out train the 'Manx Missile' mastered as he powered across the finish line well ahead of Belgian Jasper Philipsen, last year's sprint points green jersey winner.

Race leader and two-time former winner Tadej Pogacar almost hit a traffic island causing a wave of movement and a pile up of bikes and bodies behind him.

But the Slovenian preferred to focus on Cavendish after the race.

"I used to watch him on television and we loved him," Pogacar said. "Just back there I saw him and he said hey, don't you go breaking my record," he jokingly

added.

Pogacar is 25-years-old and has 12 stage wins already.

He still leads the overall standings which he enjoyed with a full yellow kit while Belgian Remco Evenepoel remains second at 45sec with defending champion Jonas Vingegaard third at 50sec. Biniam Girmay, who became the first black African to win a Tour stage in Turin on Sunday took the sprint points green jersey on Wednesday after coming ninth in Saint-Vulbas.

Cavendish took a moment to congratulate the Eritrean sprinter. "Biniam set a record in Turin and now I've set one here," he said.

"So much goes into this and even one stage can make your career," he added.

In 2023 Cavendish left the Tour in an ambulance after a banal crash bamboozled his plans.

Two seasons previously when Cavendish equalled Merckx's stage haul in Carcassonne, it was his fourth win on that edition racing for Quick Step after years in the wilderness suffering from Epstein Barr virus.

He missed out on a 35th stage on the Champs Elysees coming second and then missed the cut for the 2022 Tour as Quick Step picked Fabio Jakobsen 10 years his junior.

Cavendish joined Astana in 2023 before being persuaded to sign a one-year contract extension for this season having considered retiring.



One interesting fact about the Tour de France is that the winner of the overall classification, who wears the iconic yellow jersey, is determined by the cumulative time across all stages. This means that consistency and strategic racing are crucial, as the overall winner may not necessarily win the most individual stages but rather maintains the best overall time throughout the race.

Schumacher blackmail suspects had 'family photos'

AFP | Berlin, Germany

Two men accused of trying to blackmail relatives of Formula One legend Michael Schumacher had access to private family photos, German prosecutors said yesterday.

Data records combed by investigators included "photo files relating to the Schumacher family's private life", the prosecutors in the western city of Wuppertal said in a statement.

German authorities announced in June they had arrested a father and son on suspicion of trying to blackmail the Schumacher family.

The suspects contacted family representatives claiming to have access to files which the Schumachers "would not want to have published", prosecutors said.

"To stop the files being pub-



Schumacher (L) poses in Madonna di Campiglio with his wife Corinna 16 January 2003

lished online, the perpetrators demanded a payment in the millions," they said.

The suspects allegedly transferred "individual files" to the

family in a bid to show they were not bluffing.

Michael Schumacher, a seven-time Formula One world champion, has not been seen in

public since he suffered a serious brain injury in a 2013 skiing accident in the French Alps.

The two suspects, who were on probation in another case,

were arrested by police on June 19 in a supermarket car park in Gross-Gerau, south of Frankfurt. Prosecutors on Wednesday said "intensive investigations" were being carried out into the case but no further details could be given "for reasons of investigative tactics". Schumacher's family in May won a legal action against a German tabloid magazine which printed a fake AI interview with the 55-year-old German former race driver.

Magazine Die Aktuelle had in April 2023 claimed it had an interview with the motorsport legend but the article in fact contained quotes which had been computer-generated.

German tabloid Bild reported that Schumacher's family was awarded 200,000 euros (\$220,000) in compensation for the claim.

Japanese climber dies in Pakistan mountain fall

AFP | Gilgit, Pakistan

A Japanese climber fell to his death while descending a mountain in Pakistan, a local official told AFP Wednesday, weeks after two compatriots were declared dead on the same peak.

Onishi Hiroshi, 64, was returning from an expedition up the 7,027-metre (23,054-foot) Spantik mountain when the incident happened on Tuesday.

"While descending, he fell into a crevasse near Camp 2," Ataur Rehman Kakar, the Nagar district deputy commissioner, told AFP on Wednesday.

"The other climber and porters recovered the dead body and brought it to Camp 1 safely," he added.

Hiroshi was one of four Japanese mountaineers who began their climb on June 10, supported by Pakistani porters.

Two Japanese climbers died during a separate expedition last month.

Indian World Cup winners head home after hurricane delay

New Delhi, India

India's T20 Cricket World Cup winners were finally heading home yesterday, officials said, after a hurricane in the West Indies delayed their departure.

Favourites India won the title on Saturday after defeating South Africa in a thrilling final, but their travel plans were disrupted by Hurricane Beryl.

"The team has left from Barbados on a special Air India flight," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) vice-president Rajeev Shukla told the Press Trust of India.

Rohit Sharma's men were scheduled to reach the Indian capital New Delhi on Thursday morning, where they will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The special flight was arranged after the players were stranded in a hotel for three days after the victory.

Rohit, who announced his T20 international retirement alongside fellow star Virat Kohli after the final, posted a picture of him holding the T20 trophy with teammate Suryakumar Yadav aboard the flight, with a caption "Coming home".

After their meeting with Modi, the team will fly to Mumbai for a victory parade in the heart of India's financial capital, Shukla said.



India's Virat Kohli (L) and captain Rohit Sharma celebrate