

TOUR OF AL ZUBARAH

Van Uden wins prologue ahead of champion Mirza

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By Yash Mudgal
Doha

Roman van Uden of Qatar's Carbon Wheels Cycling Club won the prologue of the second edition of the Tour of Al Zubarah at the Aspire Zone yesterday.

With this individual time trial win, the New Zealander claimed the yellow jersey, which he will sport during the stage one today. He also claimed the white jersey.

"I am very happy with the win. It's a good start for me and my team," Uden said after winning the 3.9km individual time trial in 5:03.41 sec.

"It was a late start... It was quite dark in the evening, but the course had good lights over and around. It's going to be tough to get time bonuses at the finish of each stage. I know there will be lot of wind. We will be lucky if we can keep the race together for the sprint. Hopefully I will get some time bonuses for myself."

Talking about his team Carbon Wheels, he said, "Our team is a brand new Doha team. We opened a couple of weeks ago and we have got a good team; the guys are racing and training in Doha," he said.

This year the stage winners will get 10-second time bonus.

Defending champion Mohamed Yousef Mirza of team Giant-GMS finished second to set up an interesting tussle in the coming stages of the tour.

"I am happy with my timing today," Mirza said, who won the inaugural edition of the tour with UAE national team.

"I am happy to be here again in Doha. The prologue track was new for me. It was very hard... It was not flat... but I am happy with my timings today," he said.

"I am fully fit for the race and hopefully with the help of my new team I will once again deliver the result here," the UAE rider, who finished fourth at the Asian Games, added.

It was not a good day for Qatar Team, who are without their best rider Ahmed al-Bourdaini, as their rider Diego Hossfeldt lost the track.

Qatar coach Branko Filip was not satisfied with his team's show on the opening day of the tour, as he said, "It was not a good day for us. Diego lost the



Roman van Uden (centre) of Qatar's Carbon Wheels Cycling Club on the podium with Aspire Logistics director Phillip Templar (third from right), Qatar Cycling Federation assistant secretary general Nasser al-Kaabi (third from left) and other officials after winning the prologue of the 2nd edition of Tour of Al Zubarah at Aspire Zone yesterday.

road. It was his mistake. He was studying in England and was late for checking the track during training. I am not at all happy with him."

According to Filip, Bourdaini, who

secured some good results during the year, was shaping well for the race. But the rider suffered a crash during practice recently and sustained a finger crack, which has thrown the

coach's game plan for the race in total disarray. "I am missing Bourdaini. He was our main rider and he is out for at least four weeks. Our goal was to win a stage, but

without him it is very difficult for us," said the coach. "Now, I have only five riders... we are still determined to put up some good show in the coming couple of days."

The third place went to Primož Roglic of ADR.

Today's run is a 120.1 kilometre stage between Madinat al-Kabban to Dukhan Beach.



Van Uden (second from left) and Templar (second from right) with defending champion and second-placed rider Mohamed Yousef Mirza (right) of team Giant-GMS and third-placed Primož Roglic of ADR on the podium yesterday.

