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Top three cyclists - New Zealand's Roman Van Uden (centre), UAE's Yousif Mirza (right) Primoz Roglic of Slovenia after the time trial pose for a group photo on the opening day of Tour of Zubarah yesterday. CENTRE: A beautiful view of action at Aspire Zone. RIGHT: Van Uden (centre) who topped the time trial poses for a group photo with the officials. PICTURES BY: SALIM MATRAMKOT

## Van Uden tops Aspire time trial

### Kiwi rider faster than defending champion Mirza on opening day of Tour of Zubarah

**DOHA:** New Zealand's Roman Van Uden yesterday topped the time trial on the opening day of the Tour of Zubarah pushing UAE challenger Yousif Mirza to the second spot.

The 26-year-old - riding for Carbon Wheels - clocked a time of 5:03.01 over the 3.9km track laid out at Aspire Zone.

Mirza, the defending champion at Tour of Zubarah, was just 1.27secs slower than Van Uden while Primoz Roglic of Slovenia finished third fastest (+ 1.84secs) in windy conditions.

"It was a late start in the evening, fairly dark," Van Uden said when asked about a recap on the day's proceedings.

"The course had good lights but it was rough ride on the cobblestones. It made for a solid ride. It was fairly interesting at the last few corners," he added.

"I knew that my finish was pretty good. I am happy to win," Van Uden said.

"It will be tough (the rest of the race). There are time bonuses at the finish each day but I will be lucky to keep the ride together for the sprints," the tall Kiwi added.

"Hopefully I can get some bonuses but it is going to be harder the next few days," he said. "I know there's always a lot of wind. It should be interesting,"

Stages	
Stage 1: December 18:	Madinat Al Kabaan - Dukhan, 120.10kms
Stage 2: December 19:	Madinat Al Shamal, 116.80kms
Stage 3: December 20:	Lekhwiya - Al Zubarah, 122.60kms

the Tour of Sharjah winner said. "It is a brand new team - Carbon Wheels. It is a brand new bike shop in downtown Doha. Yeah, they have just opened in the last couple of weeks," he said. "They are a good team. They ride and train in Doha," Van Uden added.

Mirza, who rode for the UAE team last year, has switched to Team Giant GMS (TGG).

"I am happy to be here again in Doha," Mirza said recalling his win last year.

"This circuit is not flat. We did a good time. I am very happy," Mirza said.

"Tomorrow, the real Tour starts. If you win a stage, you get 10 seconds. I hope me and my team, we do well," added the rider while declaring himself completely ready for the race.

"I am fully fit. Every rider has prepared well. You know the Tour of Zubarah has grown in just one season. The riders look forward



Action from the opening day of Tour of Zubarah in Doha yesterday.



to being here," the UAE national said. "You can see that teams are from Europe and some riders are from Asia. There are three sides from the UAE," he said.

"I am happy with my new team. They have been sponsoring me for the last three months. I hope I

can fetch good results for them. It is a one-year contract. I hope to continue with them," he said.

Today the riders will start at Madinat Al Kabaan in the north of the country and end 120kms later in Dukhan.

The second stage will start

from Al Shamal Sports Club and end at Madinat Al Shamal tomorrow.

The third and the final stage will be held on Saturday.

The riders will complete a total distance of 363.4kms over the four stages.

The main sponsors of the race are Aspire Zone Foundation (AZF) and Qatar Museums.

The Tour of Zubarah is entered on the UCI Asia Tour calendar and the event is registered as a class 2.2 event.

THE PENINSULA

## Amla, De Villiers smash tons on South Africa's day

**CENTURION:** Captain Hashim Amla and his senior lieutenant AB de Villiers both hit centuries as South Africa took command after early setbacks on the first day of the first Test against the West Indies at SuperSport Park yesterday.

South Africa were 340 for three at the close. Amla, captaining South Africa for the first time in a home Test, made 133 not out, while De Villiers hit an unbeaten 141.

They will resume today after adding 283 for the fourth wicket, a South African record against the West Indies.

The pair came together with South Africa in a minor crisis after losing three wickets for no runs with the total on 57.

It could have been 102 for four but Amla, on 25, had an escape

when a ball from Kumar Roach brushed his off stump but did not dislodge a ball.

It was a superb display of batting by two of the best batsmen in the world but it was not a good day for the West Indians, who failed to take advantage of sending South Africa in to bat in heavily overcast conditions.

Much of the bowling was mediocre and the tourists suffered a blow when Roach, who was comfortably their best bowler, pulled up lame after bowling five balls of his 16th over half an hour after tea. Roach went for a scan on his right ankle and a team spokesman said the results would be assessed overnight.

Roach was surprisingly not given the new ball and runs flowed freely from South African openers Alviro Petersen and Dean



AB de Villiers and Hashim Amla

Elgar before he was brought into the attack after 44 runs had been scored in nine overs.

He immediately imposed some control and made the first breakthrough in his third over when he had Petersen caught at first slip and followed up with the wicket of Faf du Plessis, who was caught



behind. When Roach limped off he had taken two for 52.

Roach's wickets sandwiched the dismissal of Elgar, who was caught at gully off left-armed Sheldon Cottrell. The three wickets fell in the space of 15 balls.

Rain delayed the start by half an hour and the sky was overcast

for almost the entire day but with the exception of Roach, the bowlers were not consistent enough to exploit any assistance from the conditions. After the early setbacks, Amla and De Villiers saw their team through to lunch, adding 45 runs before the break with largely risk-free batting.

Their stroke play blossomed after Amla's escape in the first over after the interval.

Amla was beaten by a ball from Roach, who appealed for a catch behind.

The 100 partnership came up at the same time off 156 deliveries. Amla's fifty followed soon afterwards off 87 balls with seven fours. De Villiers became the fifth South African to score 20 Test centuries after facing 138 balls, while Amla's 23rd hundred came off 161 deliveries.

Scoreboard	
<b>South Africa (1 innings):</b>	
A Petersen c Smith b Roach.....	27
D Elgar c Samuels b Cottrell.....	28
F du Plessis c Ramdin b Roach.....	0
H Amla (batting).....	133
A de Villiers (batting).....	141
Extras (B-3, LB-5, NB-1, W-2).....	11
<b>Total (for 3 wickets).....</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>To bat:</b> S van Zyl, O de Kock, V Philander, D Steyn, K Abbott, M Morkel.	
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-57, 2-57, 3-57.	
<b>Bowling:</b> Taylor 16.1-2-77-0; Cottrell 17-1-74-1 (1nb, 1w); Roach 15.5-4-52-2 (1w); Berrin 30-5-82-0; Samuels 11-0-45-0; Brathwaite 1-0-2-0.	
<b>West Indies:</b> D Ramdin, K Brathwaite, D Smith, L Johnson, M Samuels, S Chandrapaul, J Blackwood, K Roach, J Taylor, S Berrin, S Cottrell.	