

Tour de France

Kittel wins Tour stage 10, Froome keeps race lead

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Associated Press

BERGERAC, France — Marcel Kittel has no serious challenger for the King of the Sprint title at this year's Tour de France.

The German sprinter won the 10th stage with remarkable ease on Tuesday, while Chris Froome stayed safely in the main pack to retain the race leader's yellow jersey.

Kittel perfectly timed his effort in the final straight to post his fourth stage win since the start of the race, crossing the line ahead of fellow German John Degenkolb.

The stage took the peloton on a flat, 178-kilometer (111-mile) run from Perigueux to Bergerac in southwestern France.

Froome, the three-time Tour champion, will wear the yellow jersey for the 50th time on Wednesday — joining five-time Tour winner Jacques Anquetil in fourth place on the all-time list behind Eddy Merckx (96), Bernard Hinault (75), and Miguel Indurain (60).

"A huge, huge honor," the British rider said of the 50 days in yellow.

Kittel was in 10th place after negotiating the two sharp



Germany's Marcel Kittel, wearing the best sprinter's green jersey celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the tenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 178 kilometers (110.6 miles) with start in Perigueux and finish in Bergerac, France, Tuesday, July 11, 2017.

AP Photo/Christophe Ena

corners of a challenging final kilometer, before turning on the power to surge ahead of his rivals with 150 meters left and securing his 13th career win on the Tour.

He won by a bike's length and had plenty of time to raise his arms in celebration before crossing the line.

Kittel said his confidence is high after his string of victories.

"I know now from the last sprints that I can hold that speed to the finish line," he said. "I almost cannot believe what's happening here at the Tour."

Dutch rider Dylan Groenewegen completed the podium in the medieval town.

With Mark Cavendish, Peter Sagan and Arnaud Demare out of the race,

Kittel strengthened his grip on the best sprinter's green jersey. French sprinter Nacer Bouhanni, who had to settle for a sixth-place finish, acknowledged Kittel's superiority.

"Kittel was the strongest, he came from behind," Bouhanni said. "He won four sprints out of five, he is the best sprinter of this Tour."

After a plane journey

across France and a rest day, the race resumed in Perigueux for a flat ride through the lush landscapes of the Dordogne province in southwestern France.

Following a hectic stage in the Jura on Sunday and with two hard stages in the Pyrenees mountains later this week, Froome and his main rivals were happy to let two French riders with no ambitions for the overall race lead escape from the pack.

Yoann Offredo went on his own immediately after the race director waved the flag to signal the start. He was joined soon afterward by Elie Gesbert, the youngest rider in the peloton at 22 years old, and the pair quickly opened a gap.

Their lead stabilized at about five minutes as the peloton moved past the Lascaux cave, a prehistoric World Heritage site featuring some superb hunting scenes. Second-place Fabio Aru was all smiles near Domme — a picturesque town perched on a breathtaking cliff above the Dordogne river — and shook hands with another rider at a pedestrian pace.

"We chatted, admired the countryside. It was very pleasant," Warren Barguil said, summing up the day.

Toward the end, the

sprinters' teams organized the chase, reducing the deficit of the peloton to a little more than two minutes with 40 kilometers left. Offredo and Gesbert fought hard until the end, but were hampered by a strong headwind and were caught seven kilometers from the finish.

There was no major change in the overall standings, with Aru still trailing 18 seconds behind Froome and Frenchman Romain Bardet in third place, 51 seconds back.

"It was a more quiet day today, without wind, no stress," Froome said. "I'm already thinking about the Pyrenees, it's the next big goal, I'll need to be ready."

Wednesday's stage is a flat and long 203.5-kilometer (126.5-mile) route from Eymet to Pau. It will be another day for the sprinters before a mountain marathon of more than 200 kilometers the next day.

Froome said Friday's stage could be decisive and the next big battle between the contenders for overall victory.

"In the past, we have seen Grand Tours shaped by these stages before," he said. "That could be another day that could be decisive in this year's Tour."

ALL-STAR GAME: Molina's hits history-making homer

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10th to help the AL win its fifth in a row. And for the first time since 1964, the rivalry is back to all even — 43 wins apiece with two ties, and each side has scored exactly 361 runs.

Andrew Miller finished off the win and celebrated with his AL teammates. Even though home-field advantage in the World Series no longer goes to the league that wins the All-Star Game, it was a victory worth savoring.

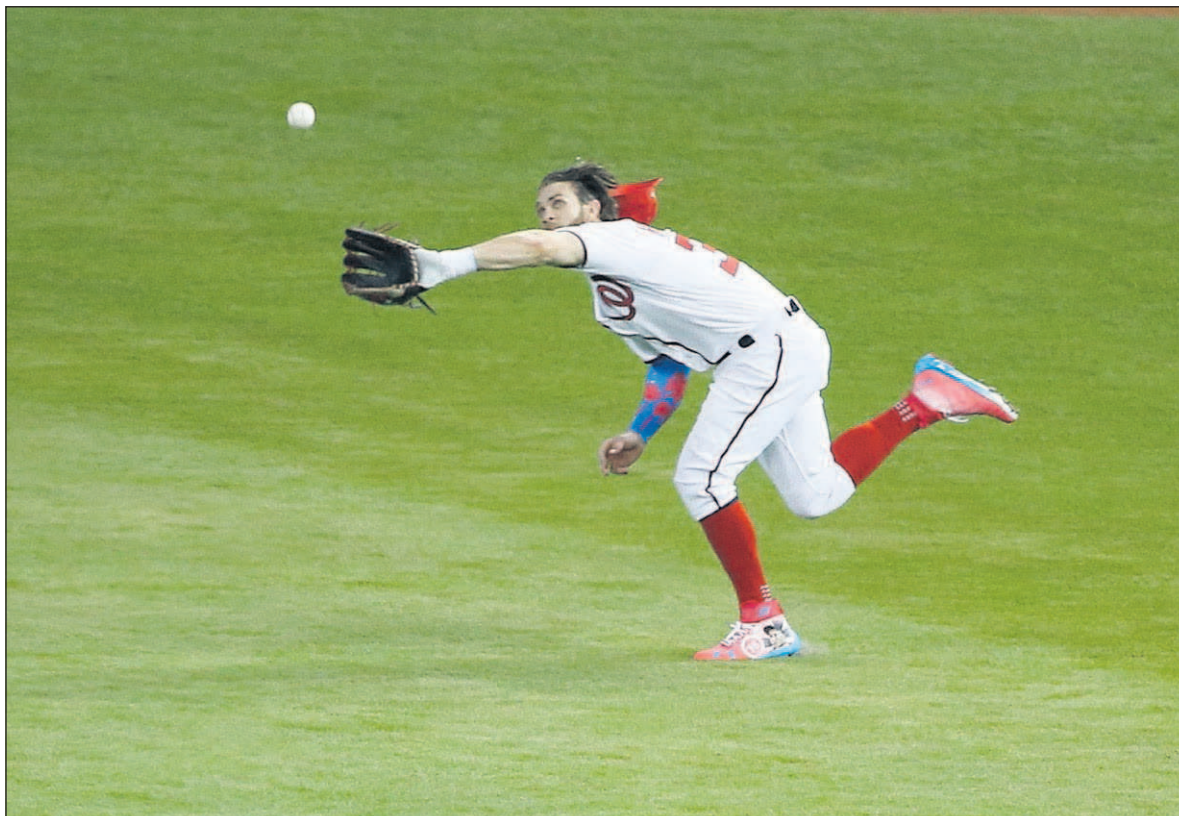
Cano earned the MVP honor with his one clutch swing. At 34, the Seattle second baseman was among the oldest players in a game built around so many of the sport's new, young stars. He sent a hanging curve off the back wall of the right-field bullpen, then blew a bubble with his gum when rounding the bases.

Cano's homer came exactly 50 years after the previous extra-inning homer in an All-Star Game, when Tony Perez hit a tiebreaking 15th-inning shot off Catfish Hunter in the NL's 2-1 win at Anaheim, California. Perez, now a Marlins executive, was among eight Latin-born Hall of Famers who threw out ceremonial first pitches.

Miguel Sano put the AL ahead in the fifth with a bloop RBI single against Alex Wood. Yadier Molina tied it in the sixth with a home run off Ervin Santana.

Molina had just entered behind the plate in the top half and snapped off an All-Star first — Nelson Cruz pulled a phone out of his uniform pants and asked the catcher to snap a photo of him with umpire Joe West.

Davis wasn't with the Cubs last fall when they won the World Series for



National League's Washington Nationals outfielder Bryce Harper (34) catches a hit by American League's Kansas City Royals Salvador Perez (13), during the second inning at the MLB baseball All-Star Game, Tuesday, July 11, 2017, in Miami.

AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee



National League's St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina (4) rounds the bases after hitting a homerun in the sixth inning, during the MLB baseball All-Star Game, Tuesday, July 11, 2017, in Miami.

pitcher in an All-Star Game, set by Dizzy Dean in 1934.

WEB GEM

Harper made a diving backhand catch in short right center as his cap fell off, robbing Salvador Perez of a hit for the final out of the second. Harper wore blue-and-orange spikes with the image of late Marlins star Jose Fernandez and the pitcher's No. 16 outlined in a circle.

WILD THING

Yankees reliever Dellin Betances, dealing with mechanical problems of late, threw just 12 of 23 pitches for strikes in the third. He walked Harper and Buster Posey, threw a pair of wild pitches and got out of a bases-loaded jam when Murphy grounded out. Betances joined Juan Marichal, Dave Stieb and John Smoltz as the only ones to throw two wild pitches in an All-Star inning.

"After I lost Harper I lost concentration a little bit," Betances said. "I was able to settle down and make pitches when I needed to."

the first time in 108 years. He was acquired in a trade from Kansas City to fortify the bullpen, and was the only Cubs player in this showcase. Chicago has struggled this season, going into the break at 43-45.

Kimbrel, throwing at up to 100 mph, stranded runners at second and third to end the ninth, striking out Michael Conforto. The Boston closer wound up with the win.

Miller, whose Cleveland Indians lost the World Series in Game 7, got the save with some help from Upton.

A left fielder playing in right for the first time in four years, Upton extended his arm on a full run to catch Corey Seager's liner leading off the 10th. Miller walked Joey Votto with two outs, then struck out rookie sensation Cody Bellinger.

The AL's first six hits were

by first-time All-Stars but some things don't change. The AL has won 12 of 15 and 17 of the last 20 All-Star Games played to a decision.

The night's most-watched sluggers fizzled.

A night day after winning the Home Run Derby with 47 long balls, Yankees rookie sensation Aaron Judge went 0 for 3 with a strikeout, groundout and flyout. Giancarlo Stanton, the star slugger of the hometown Marlins, was 0 for 3 with a pair of strikeouts and a dribbler in front of the plate.

NL pitchers struck out 14, including four by Carlos Martinez, three by Kenley Jansen and two each by starter Max Scherzer and Greg Holland. AL pitchers fanned nine.

In the first All-Star Game in Florida, Jonathan Schoop doubled off Wood with two

outs in the fifth and came home when Sano blooped a single about a foot fair down the right-field line, 207 feet from home plate, where right fielder Bryce Harper, second baseman Daniel Murphy and first baseman Ryan Zimmerman — all from the Washington Nationals — were unable to reach it.

Two days shy of his 35th birthday, Molina became the oldest catcher to homer in an All-Star Game, driving a 95 mph from Santana into the right-field bullpen.

Molina was part of a modern All-Star moment in the top of the inning, when he entered wearing a shiny gold helmet ad chest protector. Cruz pulled a phone out of a uniform pants pocket when he stepped to the plate and asked Molina to take a picture of him posing with West, who last month became

the third ump to work 5,000 regular-season games.

Scherzer, limited to one inning, used a full-count slider to strike out Judge, only third rookie to bat third in an All-Star Game after Joe DiMaggio in 1936 and Dick Wakefield in 1943.

"When you get to face the best from the other side and you get the start, the adrenaline starts flowing and you want to throw everything as hard as you can," Scherzer said.

AL starter Chris Sale, who threw two innings, fanned Stanton in the first. The lefty also neared 100 mph with his fastest pitch of the season.

"I was able to let loose a little bit," Sale said. "I wouldn't want to take that style into the regular season."

Martinez hit 100 mph on four of 14 pitches in the third. He matched the most strikeouts by a St. Louis Cardinals

BASEBALL:

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order in the seventh to get the win.

Noland pitched three innings of relief and allowed no runs on just one hit.

Smith batted 2 for 3 with three RBI and two runs, and Lukas Tolan added two RBI as well.

La Grande found plenty of gaps in Game 1, and hit five doubles and a triple to go with Logan Atkinson's homer.

The game was tied at 2-2 going into the third inning when Aaron Goss (2 for 3) doubled to drive in a run, then Atkinson followed with a line drive to right field that cleared the bases. Isaac Chamberlain was 2 for 3 with three RBI for La Grande.

Jon Gonzalez pitched the complete game for the win. He allowed four hits, struck out five and walked four.

WIMBLEDON: Djokovic beats Mannarino in delayed quarterfinal

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good to me."

Williams revealed in 2011 that she was diagnosed with Sjogren's syndrome, which can sap energy and cause joint pain. As time went on, there were questions about whether she might retire, especially after a half-dozen first-round losses at majors. But she kept going, and with her recent successes, a championship this week would return the American to the top five in the rankings for the first time in six years.

"I just always felt like I have to keep trying," said Williams, who repeatedly took advantage of Ostapenko's second serves at around 70 mph (110 kph). "That's all I felt like."

To get to what would be her ninth final at the All England Club, the



AP Photo/Alastair Grant

Britain's Johanna Konta celebrates after winning the second set against Romania's Simona Halep Tuesday at the Wimbledon.

10th-seeded Williams will need to win Thursday against No. 6 Johanna Konta, the first British woman in the Wimbledon semifinals since Virginia Wade was the runner-up in 1978.

"I definitely feel that age is not a factor with her," Konta said about Williams. "She's just a tremendous champion, and I feel very, very humbled, and I'm very excited to share the court with her again."

With Wade, the 1977 champion, sitting in the Royal Box, Konta prevented Halep from rising to No. 1 by beating her 6-7 (2), 7-6 (5), 6-4. The result means that Karolina Pliskova, who lost in the second round, will replace Angelique Kerber, who departed in the fourth, atop the rankings next week.

The other semifinal will be Garbine Muguruza of Spain against 87th-ranked Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia. Muguruza, the 2015 Wimbledon runner-up and 2016 French Open champion, defeated Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-4. Rybarikova, the

lowest-ranked Wimbledon semifinalist since 2008, got past 24th-seeded CoCo Vandeweghe of the U.S. 6-3, 6-3 in a match suspended at 2-all in the second set because of showers and moved from Court No. 1 to Centre Court so it could be finished indoors.

Rybarikova had never been past the third round in her 35 previous career majors, including seven opening-round exits in a row at Wimbledon from 2008-14. She missed the second half of last season after wrist and knee operations, and her ranking fell out of the top 400.

"I had a really tough time," Rybarikova said, "and right now, I'm here, and everything paid off."

In the last men's fourth-round match, Novak Djokovic took a medical timeout to have his right shoulder

massaged, and he declared himself disappointed with the condition of the turf in the main stadium. Otherwise, Djokovic had little trouble eliminating 51st-ranked Adrian Mannarino of France 6-2, 7-6 (5), 6-4 in a match postponed Monday night because of darkness.

"It's been something that I've been dragging back and forth for a while now," Djokovic said about his shoulder. "But I'm still managing to play, which is the most important thing."

The men's quarterfinals Wednesday: Djokovic against Tomas Berdych, Roger Federer against Milos Raonic, defending champion Andy Murray against Sam Querrey, and Marin Cilic against Gilles Muller, who stunned Rafael Nadal in a marathon that ended 15-13 in the fifth set Monday.