

Tour de France

Aru takes over yellow jersey, Bardet wins stage

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Associated Press

PEYRAGUDES, France — For his three previous victories at the Tour de France, Chris Froome took advantage of the first big mountain stage to deliver the decisive blow.

On Thursday, that tried and trusted strategy never got going, and he surrendered the overall race lead to Fabio Aru.

With its mountain top finish, the hugely demanding first stage in the Pyrenees looked like the perfect setting for his Sky Team to stamp its authority on the race, and to help Froome increase his lead in the general classification.

Until the final 350 meters of the 214.5-kilometer (133 miles) marathon through six grueling ascents in the Pyrenees, the well-oiled Sky machine had everything under control.

Froome's teammates had set a fast tempo that prevented others from attacking - a tactic that prepared the ground for Froome's expected assault in the steep final section leading to the finish in the ski station of Peyragudes.

Froome's move never came.

Not only was he unable to attack, the British rider also cracked during the climb. Frenchman Romain Bardet won Stage 12 ahead of Rigoberto Uran and Aru, who seized the lead from Froome by six seconds.



Italy's Fabio Aru speeds down col des Ares pass during the twelfth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 214.5 kilometers (133.3 miles) with start in Pau and finish in Peyragudes, France, Thursday, July 13, 2017.

Bardet is third overall, 25 seconds off the pace. Uran was handed a 20-second penalty for accepting a water bottle in the last five kilometers, which is not allowed, and lies in fourth place overall, 55 seconds back.

"My teammates did such an amazing job," Froome said. "I didn't have the legs at the end to finish it off. Simple as that. No excuses."

When Aru launched his attack in the final few hundred meters, Froome was only able to follow the Astana team leader for a few bike lengths before he cracked. He ended up crossing the line in seventh place, 22 seconds

behind Bardet.

Bidding to become the first Frenchman to win the Tour since Bernard Hinault in 1985, Bardet was the strongest in the brutal incline and described his third stage win on the Tour as "an immense joy."

He said he had visited the ski station with his parents to scout out the final climb.

"I knew it could suit me," he said. "I was patient. I made the difference on the final hill. There was not much to do before that with the wind and the Sky train."

Aru had trailed Froome by 18 seconds at the start of the stage.

"It's one of the most beautiful things that can happen to you in life, wearing the yellow jersey," said Aru. "Clearly, it won't be easy to defend it. There are still nine more stages, we'll do our best."

The final of the six ascents on the menu of the 214.5 kilometers (133 miles) stage between Pau and the ski station was too difficult for Froome, who had worn the yellow jersey over the previous seven stages.

He was grimacing with the effort, his arms glistening with sweat, as he wrestled his bike up the super-steep climb that was used a location for the 1997 James Bond movie

"Tomorrow Never Dies."

Froome zig-zagged his bike across the tarmac as he tried to cope with a gradient so steep that it seemed to glue his wheels to the road.

The only yellow item he wore after the finish was the small ring in his nose to help him breathe.

"I did my utmost at the end. But I didn't have the legs to follow," he said.

Froome has only a few hours to bounce back before Friday's short but hard stage to Foix, which features three Category 1 climbs — the second-hardest difficulty rating. Now that Froome has shown signs of weakness, the attacks could come right from the start as his rivals look to build on the momentum.

"Aru attacked a bit too early to win the stage, but he got the jersey and saw that Froome can be beaten. He'll definitely try some more," Astana manager Alexandre Vinokourov said. "Sky is very strong, but today Froome took a hit and his team could be demoralized. Let's hope our guys find more motivation."

Rain was falling as the peloton started the stage in Pau, before a breakaway of 12 riders gained a lead of more than six minutes on some fairly flat sections of the course.

Froome's teammates rode at the front with Aru's squad just behind, but showed no interest in reducing the gap with the breakaways.

Sky stepped up the tempo in the first really difficult ascent,

the Col de Mente, where Spanish great Luis Ocaña crashed out in a downhill section in 1971 while wearing the yellow jersey. The twisting and punishing Port de Bales, a narrow, 11.7-kilometer climb at an average gradient of 7.7 percent - rated as 'beyond a category' because of its difficulty - took a heavy toll on the lead riders. The breakaway group split up as Stephen Cummings launched a solo offensive.

Aru's teammate Jakob Fuglsang, who broke two bones in a crash during Wednesday's stage, struggled at the back and dropped out of contention after starting the day in fifth place overall.

Cummings had a two-minute lead at the top of Port de Bales and went all out in the descent as the fog broke and the weather picked up. Froome, Aru and Mikel Nieve misjudged a turn in the downhill but the race leader and his rival pushed hard on the brakes to avoid a crash. Nieve went straight onto the grass between lorries and camping caravans.

It was nothing more than a scare for Froome, who had three teammates by his side to tackle the two final climbs, the Peyresourde and the Peyragudes ascent.

Nairo Quintana was dropped in the Peyresourde and, with no teammate to bring him back, saw his hopes of winning the Tour vanish. Cummings was then caught with 8 kilometers left, lining up a dramatic finale.

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the second out, Faith Broadfoot made it 3-0 with a single to center that scored Samp and Samford.

All of Pendleton runs in the second inning came with two outs, and it was Jones-Hoisington that pushed the first one across when an error at shortstop gave Brielle Younes enough room to reach home from third.

Samp singled again to keep the inning going and load the bases, and Samford hit a single through the left side to get two more runs across for a 6-0 lead.

An error put the lead off runner on in the bottom of the second, and SE Portland broke up the shutout when the next batter singled to make it 6-1.

Portland wouldn't score again until the bottom of the sixth, though, and Sauren Garton earned her third win of the tournament in the circle by pitching a complete game with two hits and no earned runs allowed, six strikeouts and two walks.

Pendleton added two runs in the fifth inning on a triple by Broadfoot and a single by Kyle Sellers.

Broadfoot and Samford were both 2 for 4 with three RBI, Samp was 3 for 4, and Sellers was 1 for 1 with one RBI.

Pendleton will continue its summer representing Oregon at the Little League Softball West Regional Tournament in San Bernardino, California on July 21-28.

Golf

Howell, Schniederjans shoot 63 to share John Deere lead

Associated Press

SILVIS, Ill. — Charles Howell III and Ollie Schniederjans each shot 8-under 63 on Thursday to share the first-round lead in the John Deere Classic.

Playing alongside local favorite Zach Johnson, Howell birdied seven his first nine holes and added a birdie on No. 7 in his morning round at rain-softened TPC Deere Run. The two-time PGA Tour winner lost a playoff to Kyle Stanley two weeks ago in the Quicken Loans National.

"This morning without traffic, they were rolling like carpet," Howell said. "This morning was absolutely the best scoring we'll see all week, which would also lead me to believe that tomorrow morning you're going to see some low scores as well. Here, it's about minimizing bogeys as much as you can and take advantage of the holes that you need to."

Schniederjans birdied five of his

last eight holes in his lowest round of the PGA Tour. The 24-year-old former Georgia Tech star earned a PGA Tour card last year through the Web.com Tour.

"I haven't had a great start really all year on the first round," Schniederjans said. "I have had some decent first rounds and good Fridays, but this is the first really good round I've had on Thursday. It's nice to get off to a good start and hopefully keep it going."

Johnson was two strokes back at 65 along with Rory Sabbatini, Patrick Rodgers and Chad Campbell. Johnson, from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, won the 2012 tournament.

"With this Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday rain we had, it's one of those you feel like you got to keep the pedal down," Johnson said. "The course is still nice. I was surprised we didn't play it up today. I technically only had 1 1/2 mud balls probably, so that was pretty good considering."

LUTON: Transferred twice before landing in Corvallis

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spring game. Junior Marcus McMaryion was 9 for 14 for 126 yards and a TD; senior Darell Garretson hit on 8 of 11 passes for 66 yards and a score.

The week after spring practice ended, Luton began to get better. He reintroduced all the usual foods to his system, "and everything felt fine," he says. "Pretty soon, I was back to normal."

Luton, who transferred to OSU after throwing for 3,551 yards and 40 touchdowns with 15 interceptions in 11 games for Ventura (California) College last season, is in a competition McMaryion and Garretson for the starting QB job. The trio has led teammates through informal summer workouts since spring term ended.

"It's going really good,"

says Luton, who is taking two summer-session classes. "We're working hard, trying to get ready for the season. I've been throwing a lot with the receivers, watching (video) and doing what I can to prepare."

Luton says he has developed a good comprehension of the OSU playbook.

"I'm a hands-on learner," he says. "Coming in early and going through spring ball was beneficial. They threw me out there, and I learned on the run. I made mistakes, but I learned it very quickly. Doing it that way — where I could go out and just do it, and then afterward come back and really hit the film hard — it's been good. I feel really comfortable with it."

Luton spent his first two years of college at Idaho, serving as a backup QB with the Vandals as a redshirt freshman in 2015. He trans-

ferred to Ventura last year for more playing time. He thinks he has found a home in Corvallis.

"I absolutely love it here," says Luton, who earned a 3.0 grade-point average for spring term and is majoring in sociology and education. "It's been a long journey for me. This is a perfect fit so far. It's how I thought I'd feel about the place coming in here."

In February, Luton told the *Portland Tribune* his personal goal next season is to be the Beavers' starter at quarterback.

"Still is," he says. "I think I'm on track. I've been working hard. I'm trying to get everybody to rally behind me. As a new guy coming in, step one is gaining the trust of your teammates. I think I've done a good job of working with the guys."

Luton's team goals are large.

"We know how good we

are and what we can do," he says. "Everyone outside the program is saying 'six wins.' That's not my goal. My goal is bigger than that."

"We want to win the Pac-12. If we fall short, then we're at seven wins, eight wins, nine wins — wherever we're at. I don't want to shoot for six wins. I want to go to a bowl game. I want to win a bowl game. If we can strive for those things, six wins are going to happen, no problem."

To get to even six wins, the Beavers probably will have to win their opener at Colorado State on Aug. 26, the day the Rams christen their new stadium.

"We're going to come out juiced, but we're going to be disciplined, too," Luton says. "That's something Coach (Gary) Andersen has already talked to us about. We're going to be ready."

WIMBLEDON:

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here. And I was like, 'I wish she could do this for me,'" Williams said with a laugh. "And I was like, 'No, this time you have to do it for yourself.' So here we are."

On Saturday, the 10th-seeded American will participate in her second Grand Slam final of the season, and 16th of her career, this time against 14th-seeded Garbine Muguruza of Spain.

"She knows how to play, especially Wimbledon finals," Muguruza, the 2015 Wimbledon runner-up and 2016 French Open champion, said about Williams. "It's going to be, like, a historic final again."

Muguruza overwhelmed 87th-ranked Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia 6-1, 6-1 in the earlier semifinal.

Williams arrived in England a few weeks after being involved in a two-car accident in Florida; not long afterward, a passenger in the other vehicle died. At her initial news conference at Wimbledon, a tearful Williams briefly left the room to compose herself after being asked about the crash.

She has tried, coach David Witt said, to "just focus on the tennis."

In the semifinals, it was Konta who had the first chance to nose ahead, a point from serving from the opening set when it was 4-all and Williams was serving down 15-40.

Williams erased the first break point with a backhand winner down the line, and the second with a 106 mph (171 kph) second serve that went right at Konta's body. It was a risky strategy, going for so much pace on a second serve, but it worked. That opened a run in which Williams won 12 of 13 points.

"She looks to dictate from the very first ball," Konta said. "When she puts herself in a position to do that, she plays with a lot of depth, a lot of speed, and you don't get much of a chance to get your, I guess, grip into the points."

Williams wouldn't face another break point and, later, produced another impressive second serve — in the second set, at 103 mph (166 kph), it went right at Konta, who jumped out of the way.

Konta played quite well, especially early, and finished with more winners, 20 to 19, each greeted by roars from the Centre Court spectators.

"They could have really been even more boisterous. I thought the crowd was so fair. And I know that they love Jo, and she gave it her all today," Williams said. "It's a lot of pressure. It's a lot of pressure. I thought she handled it well. I think my experience just helped a lot."

This was her 10th Wimbledon appearances; Konta had never been past the second round at the grass-court tournament before this year.

In the other semifinal, Muguruza won 15 of the first 20 points en route to a 5-0 lead. Even though Rybarikova entered having won 18 of her past 19 grass-court matches, mostly at lower-level tournaments, she suddenly looked a lot more like someone whose career record at Wimbledon before last week was 2-9.

"Not my best day," Rybarikova said. "But she didn't give me much chance to do something."

Muguruza won the point on 19 of 25 trips to the net and had a 22-8 edge in winners.

That earned the 23-year-old Muguruza a berth in her third career Grand Slam final, second at the All England Club. She lost to Serena Williams with the title on the line at Wimbledon in 2015, then beat her at Roland Garros last year.

T-WOLVES: Three softball players honored as All Americans in the classroom

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graduated earlier this spring from BMCC with his AAOT, and received the NWAC Academic Excellence Award.

Pena led the NWAC in appearances on the mound in 2016 and 2017, and led the T-Wolves in ERA this season. He recorded three wins and four saves this last season.

Rodney Scarver, a starting center fielder from Prosser, has signed to play for Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa. He had two home

runs and 13 RBIs this season, and also received the NWAC Academic Excellence Award.

Matt Palmer, a starting outfielder from Palmer, Alaska, has signed to play for Waldorf University in Forest City, Iowa. His six doubles tied him for third on the T-Wolves team. He, too, earned an NWAC Academic Excellence Award and graduated earlier this year with his AAOT.

"I'm extremely proud of all of these individuals," said BMCC coach Brad Baker. "All of them

were hard workers, great people, great teammates, and good students at Blue Mountain. We will miss them here, but I am excited for their new opportunities.

Three softball players earn national scholar athlete awards

PENDLETON — Three Blue Mountain softball players have received All-American Scholar Athlete awards from the National

Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) — Lauren Cagle, Miah Slater and Brooke Kralman.

All three Timberwolves maintained a GPA of 3.5 or better during the 2016-2017 academic year while also making valuable contributions to the BMCC softball team.

"This is a well-deserved award for these players, especially for being recognized for their excellence in the classroom," said BMCC coach Steve Richards. "All three put significant time into their studies in addition to the time

commitment softball requires. They are setting the standard that our future players can aspire to."

Cagle, an infielder from Susanville, California, graduated earlier this spring. Slater, a pitcher and infielder from Elgin, and Kralman, an outfielder from Milton-Freewater, will be sophomores in the fall.

Established in 1983, the NFCA is the professional growth organization for fastpitch softball coaches from all competitive levels of play.