

Ford RideLondon Classique Stage One post-race quotes

The standout riders in today's (26 May) Stage One Ford RideLondon Classique, including winner Charlotte Kool, speak about the day's highlights and look forward to Stage Two tomorrow (27 May).

Charlotte Kool (Team DSM, NED)

On the final sprint, Charlotte Kool said: "It already started with a hectic final and Pfeiffer [Georgi] did two perfect countering attacks and then did an amazing lead out and the only thing I had to do was finish it off, so I'm really proud of her.

"I was quite confident [about the sprint], of course it was a bit uphill, but it's not a long climb for a long time, it's just a drag and actually in training, I also liked to sprint uphill. Of course, it's harder because you already come in with a higher heart rate, but yes, I was quite confident especially after the lead out of Pfeiffer that I could finish it off.

Describing the day's twists and turns, she added: "The first hour was a bit boring, but we tried to keep the front close enough but also not too close because we were fine with that situation and then we heard Elisa [Balsamo] stepped off and then we knew that we can expect a regular race in the end... and then we just had Pfeiffer and me, the perfect two in the front actually and for us it was a good situation and we could just play the game a bit and yes it was a nice final."

Detailing her approach for tomorrow's (27 May) Stage Two race, she said: "Same as today. I had some really good laps today and tomorrow I hope to have some good laps and I think we can go for it again tomorrow."

Clara Copponi (FDJ-Suez, FRA)

Clara Copponi, who came second, said: "I'm happy, it's a good result for me. I'm not in my best shape of the season at the moment, but I'm happy. It was a long day, boring, but the end was fast."

Speaking about the final breakaway at the end of the race, she said: "It was not really a good organisation between all the girls, and it was a bit frustrating because we know that we have a lot of good girls in the group, so we can go until the end, but we finished all together.

"I did my best in the sprint...I just don't think and just go full gas until the end. I was not supposed to do the sprint today, I was not supposed to be in the front like I say, I'm not in good shape, so it's just so good."

Lizzie Deignan (Trek-Segafredo, USA)

Making her much-anticipated return to UK road racing, Lizzie Deignan from team Trek-Segafredo, ended the first stage in third place.

She said: "It was hard at the beginning of the day, because Elisa Balsamo crashed out, but I'm just proud of the team that we made the best of a bad situation and got a podium place.

“Our director was very good from the car, making sure everybody has that little moment to take a breather, because it’s hard to hear your teammate has crashed and they’ve crashed out. It takes a minute to regroup and she allowed us that time to say right girls we need to refocus and it’s about attacking this race because we didn’t have a sprinter anymore, so we just have to attack the race.”

On being part of the final group of riders, she said: “There wasn’t as much collaboration as I would have liked, I understand everyone has their own agenda in that group and, of course, most of those riders had the sprinter in the group, but we did the best and Laretta [Hanson] my teammate rode really strong – she kept the group moving and made sure that we could stay away.

Describing her feelings of coming back to cycling after her break, she said: “You need to be in the mix in order to try and win races because it’s all about feelings and not hesitating and going on the right wheels. I do feel like that’s still missing a little bit. It’s good to be going for a win because I’ve not been in that position yet, so the more I do that obviously the easier they get.”